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**JOURNALISM  
REVIEW**

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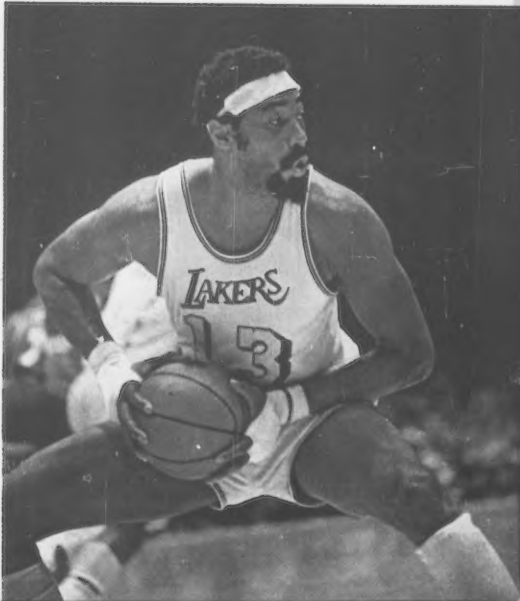
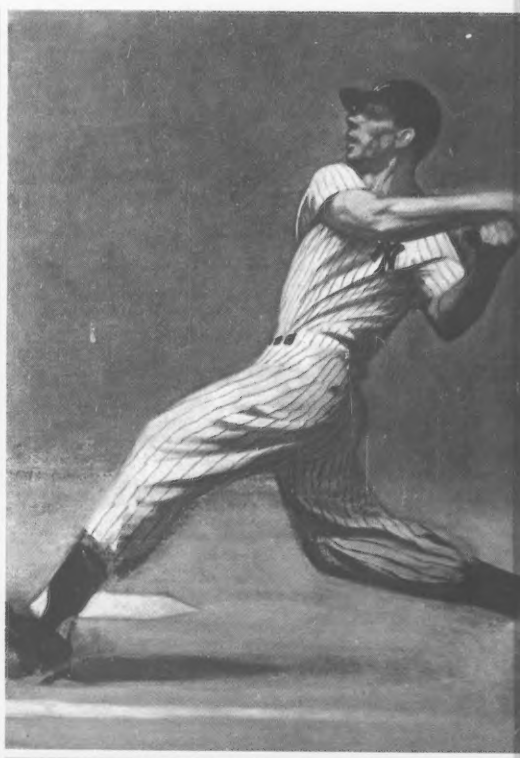
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# o! Go!



We look at them and we feel like cheering. They are some of our great ones, the heroes and heroines who delighted us and inspired us—and still do. Now we can meet them all, and 94 other greats, in their lively portraits and marvelous memorabilia at the National Portrait Gallery's dramatic exhibition, "Champions of American Sport."

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"Champions of American Sport" organized by The National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. It will appear there June 23 to September 7, 1981 and subsequently travel to Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, IL, October 15 to November 29, 1981; California Museum of Science & Industry, Los Angeles, CA, January 15 to February 28, 1982; and American Museum of Natural History, New York, NY, April 2 to June 27, 1982. The exhibition is sponsored by Philip Morris Incorporated and Miller Brewing Company.

(top left) Giles Litho Company, JAMES J. CORBETT DEFENDING HIS TITLE AGAINST CHARLIE MITCHELL, 1893. Chicago Historical Society. (top center) Photograph of JIM RYUN by RICH CLARKSON, 1966. (top right) Harvey Dinnerstein, THE WIDE SWING, 1975, Capricorn Galleries, Bethesda, Maryland. (bottom left) Photograph of PEGGY FLEMING by John G. Zimmerman, 1968. (bottom center) Photograph of WILT CHAMBERLAIN by WALTER ROOSS, JR., 1972. (bottom right) Miguel Covarrubias, HELEN WILLS, c. 1927, Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin. © Philip Morris Inc. 1981

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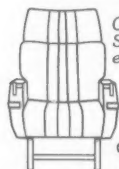
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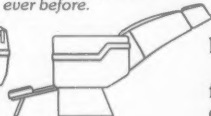
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Royal Ambassador Service is available on every transatlantic and transcontinental route we fly as well as selected shorter domestic flights.



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- To assess the performance of journalism in all its forms, to call attention to its shortcomings and strengths, and to help define — or redefine — standards of honest, responsible service . . . to help stimulate continuing improvement in the profession and to speak out for what is right, fair, and decent ●

—Excerpt from the *Review's* founding editorial, Autumn 1961

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THE MIAMI HERALD/SHIRLEY CHRISTIAN

Pulitzer Prize for Feature Photography  
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George Polk Award for Foreign Reporting  
THE MIAMI HERALD/SHIRLEY CHRISTIAN

National Headliner Award For Best Spot News Photograph  
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George Polk Award for Best Regional Reporting  
THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER

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Detroit Free Press photographer Taro Yamasaki went behind prison walls to learn the truth about conditions. He came out with these pictures, and a Pulitzer Prize for Feature Photography.





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# CHRONICLE

## Journalism pros take stand

Last March, author Thomas Thompson and his best-selling *Blood and Money* went on trial in Austin, Texas, in a \$3.75-million libel suit brought by a woman who claimed she was unfairly portrayed as an unscrupulous sexpot. In an effort to establish libel, her attorneys called as a witness Roy Fisher, dean of the University of Missouri School of Journalism. Fisher asserted that there were "generally accepted standards" of American journalism and that Thompson had violated them. "He takes on the robes of a novelist and says he knows what is going on in [the plaintiff's] mind," Fisher said. "The reader is completely disoriented as to who is making that judgment."

Fisher is one of a growing number of people in journalism who have been hired as experts to testify for plaintiffs in libel suits. Recently, for instance, a journalism professor at the University of California at Berkeley helped Carol Burnett make her case against the *National Enquirer*. A George Washington University professor took the stand in January against the *Tampa Tribune*. And attorneys representing Los Angeles Dodger first baseman Steve Garvey and his wife Cyndy in a suit against *Inside Sports* are currently searching for an expert to testify on their behalf when the case goes to trial this fall.

Such witnesses are ordinarily called in an attempt to show that the plaintiff has been a victim of journalistic "malpractice." This concept is rooted in a 1974 U.S. Supreme Court ruling which resulted in many state libel laws requiring a news organization, when confronted with a private individual claiming to have been libeled, to show that it took reasonable steps to insure accuracy. A need was thus created for expert witnesses who could testify whether the steps taken in preparing an allegedly libelous article or broadcast were, or were not, reasonable. The demand for such witnesses has soared as more and more libel suits have been going to trial, with larger and larger sums at stake.

Libel lawyers almost invariably prefer to put working reporters or editors on the stand, but plaintiffs, unlike defendants, have a hard time persuading them to testify. "It's like ten years ago with medicine," says plaintiffs' attorney Jonathan Lubell, who was victorious

in the landmark *Herbert v. Lando* case in 1979. "You couldn't get doctors to testify in medical malpractice cases. It's hard to get someone who is a member of the [journalism] industry to testify, so we go to the journalism schools." And the willingness of some professors to participate has stirred considerable controversy.

In the libel suit against the *Tampa Tribune*, attorneys for Leonard Levin, president of a solar heating company that the paper had described as engaging in sharp business practices, tried to get a journalism professor from Florida to testify, but failed. The lawyers instead hired Philip Robbins, a journalism professor at George Washington University. In his five hours of testimony, Robbins claimed that the article had been "ridiculously unfair" because it had failed to include the company's response to accusations made in it. "He just tore the damn story all to pieces," says *Tribune* managing editor Paul Hogan, who adds that "journalism professors are hired guns willing to make the words say whatever their clients want." (Robbins declined to discuss his testimony in any detail.) The *Tribune* lost the case in January and was forced to pay \$380,000.

**M**ost defense lawyers, predictably, agree with Hogan. Larry Worrall, president of a libel insurance company in Leewood, Kansas, bluntly describes testimony for plaintiffs as "something of a Judas approach," in which individuals do something "ill-serving to the profession" in exchange for a "few pieces of silver." Witnesses are generally paid \$50 or more an hour for their work, which can mount up to several thousand dollars per case.

Those who have assisted plaintiffs, however, contend that considerably more than money is at stake. "I decided that if I'm to be more than a shill for journalists, I should be willing to testify for both sides consistently," says Roy Fisher, who has also appeared on behalf of such defendants as the *Los Angeles Times* and *The Washington Post*. Fisher says the Thompson case gave him a chance to take a public stance against what he calls "inventive," or "new," journalism, which he says is "gnawing at

American journalism and jeopardizes its credibility. It leads ultimately to the kinds of stories that came out in 'Jimmy's World.'" Fisher earned around \$2,000 for his testimony, which in the end proved futile, since the plaintiff lost the case.

"As a journalism professor for thirty years, I have a kind of visceral reaction to not go out of the way to testify against newspapers," says Albert G. Pickerell, professor emeritus of journalism at Berkeley and an expert on relations between journalism and the law. But such testimony is justified, he adds, "if there is a clear case in which a publication was reckless." Carol Burnett's suit against the *National Enquirer* was such a case, he says, and he agreed to testify that the publication's retraction of its original story about Burnett's alleged drunkenness was inadequate under California state law. "When a publication does [act carelessly], it should be called to task," Pickerell says. "If not, newspapers will lose the protection they've got."

After his testimony, Pickerell received four requests to testify in other trials. He is still considering two of them, both from plaintiffs. Don Pember, of the University of Washington School of Communications, received dozens of calls from plaintiffs' attorneys after testifying briefly — but not about journalistic standards — in a 1974 suit against the Hearst Corp., but he has rejected

Roy Fisher (below) testified that Thomas Thompson (right) did not meet accepted journalism standards





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them all. "We're on the threshold of a phenomenon unless somebody gets a handle on it," he warns. "You'll have journalism professors traipsing all over the country collecting travel expenses and witness fees."

Whether that happens could depend on just how effectively the notion of malpractice can be applied to journalism. In an attempt to establish the existence of accepted standards, some witnesses cite the professional codes of organizations such as Sigma Delta Chi and the American Society of Newspaper Editors. In the Thompson trial, Roy Fisher testified that writers of nonfiction books and articles alike are obligated to include all versions of disputed information; to cite all sources so the reader can evaluate the material presented; and to avoid "embellishments" that emphasize a point of view and "pejorative" words or those with a "bias." He spec-

ifically criticized David Halberstam's writing, claiming that in some instances it "falls far short of accepted journalism standards."

But many question the universality of such standards. "I don't think cases are so frozen or rigid or well-established that it is possible for a professor to go in and say this story doesn't meet standards," says Bruce Sanford, libel lawyer for the firm Baker & Hostetler in Washington. Donald Gillmor, a mass media professor at the University of Minnesota, agrees: "I don't think our craft lends itself very well to universal sets of values. In a First Amendment sense, I think it was intended that we march to different drummers."

Candice Hughes

Candice Hughes covers the courts for the Austin (Texas) American-Statesman.

## Puerto Rico's rising Star

The San Juan Star, Puerto Rico's main English-language daily, is involved in the biggest story of its twenty-two-year history, and the effects of its coverage continue to resound throughout the island and beyond. A local version of Watergate, the story has cast a shadow over the political career of Governor Carlos Romero Barceló. It has helped develop in the Puerto Rican press a newly adversarial stance toward the local government. And, over the last year, it has prompted a Star challenge to a sweeping court gag order whose outcome could affect press access to lawyers throughout the U.S.

The story began shortly before noon on July 25, 1978, when three young men, armed with handguns, commandeered a taxi in a southern Puerto Rican town and forced the driver to take them north to Cerro Maravilla (Marvel Mountain), the site of transmitters used by the U.S. Navy, the FBI, the police, and the Puerto Rican government. The three comprised much of the membership of a fledgling pro-independence group espousing violence in support of its cause. One of the three, however, was a paid informer for Puerto Rican police intelligence; he had tipped off the police, who waited for the revolutionaries on the hilltop. Moments after the three men arrived, shooting broke out; within an hour, Carlos Enrique Soto, eighteen, the son of one of Puerto Rico's most respected novelists, and Arnaldo Dario Rosado, twenty-three, were dead; the informer, Alejandro Gonzalez Malave, suffered minor injuries.

Soon after the attack, Gonzalez Malave

testified that the two dead men had been seeking to blow up the transmitters. In a society accustomed to revolutionary activity, the deaths caused little stir, and, two days after the incident, the Star, a Scripps-Howard paper with a circulation of 50,000, ran a routine article based on the police report, which said the police had acted in self-defense after the two leftists ignored an order to halt and opened fire.

But that version quickly began to fall apart. The driver of the abducted taxi gave an account to veteran Star reporter Tomas Stella that conflicted sharply with the official report. The paper also learned that the leftists were carrying no explosives, only two books of matches and some flammable material. With that, Stella and Star reporter Manny Suarez began to probe.

A big break came in March 1979, when Suarez learned from a source close to Carlos Romero that the staunchly pro-statehood governor had been "kept informed of the infiltration of the group and its plans for several days before the actual incident," as Suarez wrote in a front-page article. Romero's response, as quoted in *El Mundo*, another island daily, was that the Star was participating in a communist-inspired "Big Lie" campaign against him.

From that time, a new Star finding on the Cerro Maravilla affair appeared at least once a month. In the face of separate inquiries by the Puerto Rico Justice Department and two federal grand juries — all of which absolved the police — Stella and Suarez, joined now by *El Mundo* and the island's other main

daily, *El Nuevo Día*, continued to raise questions. Was Gonzalez Malave only an informer or, in fact, an instigator? What had happened during Soto's forty-minute ride in a police vehicle, supposedly on the way to medical care? Perhaps most damaging of all, the Star reported that several witnesses had heard a second volley of shots, suggesting that the police had fired a round after the two youths were disarmed and wounded. While refraining from making direct accusations, the Star's reports pointed toward not only gross police misconduct but also a possible cover-up by Governor Romero himself.

By the spring of 1980, as Romero's aggressive pro-statehood campaign was gearing up for the November election, the focus of the case shifted to a \$2-million civil suit filed against the governor and several policemen by relatives of the two dead young men. Throughout most of the deposition process, a U.S. District Court judge in San Juan barred the press from the courtroom, but plaintiffs' lawyers briefed reporters on a daily basis.

When it came time for Romero to give his deposition on June 11, however, the judge, claiming further publicity might endanger selection of an unbiased jury, instituted a broad gag order barring all those present from revealing deposition evidence to any-



Island tremors: Thomas Stella (left) and Manny Suarez of The San Juan Star pursued a hot story and shook a governor

one, including reporters. The Star appealed the order, presenting its case on May 8 in the U.S. Court of Appeals in Boston. A decision to uphold the order would significantly expand the courts' power to impose gags in civil pretrial proceedings.

The episode has had a profound effect on Puerto Rican politics. The Star's investigation has been a rallying point for opponents of statehood, and a target of abuse from pro-statehood forces. During the campaign,

We're doing what has to be done.

# Arson For Profit.

---

The cost in lives and dollars is appalling. That's why  
Property-Casualty insurance companies are doing their part  
to reduce this serious crime.

---

We've all seen the headlines: "Building gutted by fire. 28 dead, scores injured."

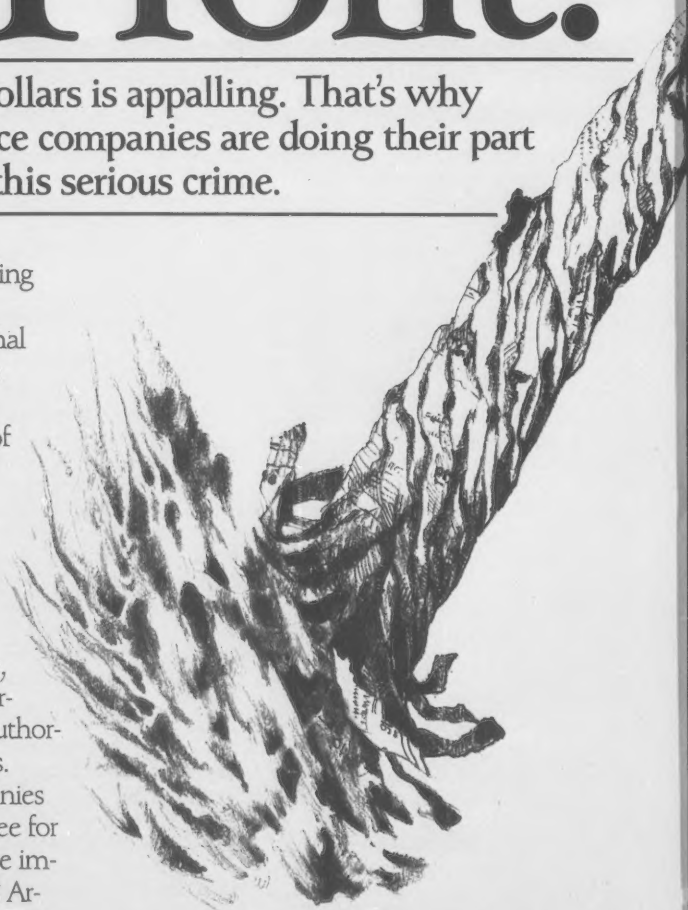
The smoke clears and the fire marshal makes his report. Too often it includes the word: *arson*.

*Arson for profit* is only a small part of the total arson problem. Most fires are *not* set for profit. The largest percentage of arson fires is caused by vandals, revenge seekers, or people in need of psychiatric help.

Arson has become a serious social problem. Its solutions demand innovative, coordinated efforts—not only by the insurance business, but by law enforcement authorities, fire inspectors, builders, and legislators.

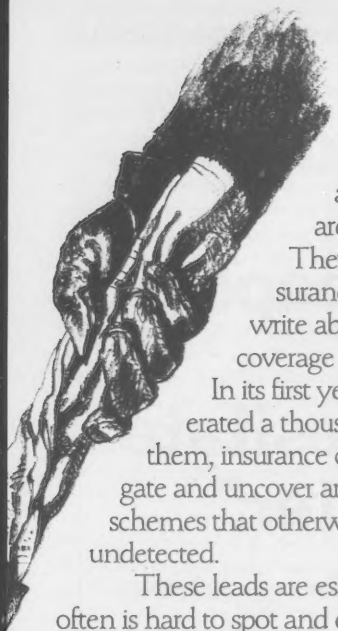
Property-Casualty insurance companies—acting through the Insurance Committee for Arson Control—help and encourage those important groups to get together. So far, 125 Arson Task Forces have been formed in 41 states.

Meanwhile, insurance companies themselves have been working to reduce the incidence of arson. A prime example, one aimed specifically at arson for profit, is the



Property Insurance Loss Register. This computerized cross-index of fire claims over \$500 is programmed to react whenever a "match-up" of similar characteristics occurs among current





and previous claims.

The PILR computer contains hundreds of thousands of claims, and hundreds more are added every day.

They come from the insurance companies that write about 90% of the fire coverage in the United States.

In its first year, the Register generated a thousand alerts. From them, insurance companies investigate and uncover arson for profit schemes that otherwise would remain undetected.

These leads are essential, because arson often is hard to spot and even harder to prove. It takes time to investigate suspicious fires; to sift rubble for clues to physical evidence, much of which may have been burned up; to probe for financial circumstances which would indicate motive.

Meanwhile, well-intentioned state laws frequently require prompt claims settlement or notice of reason for delay. Other laws have prevented law enforcement officials and insurers from sharing information about a claim. And, insurance investigators face lawsuits for libel, slander, or bad faith if their claim denial or charge of suspected arson doesn't stand up in court.

All this has had a chilling effect on investigation of possible fraudulent insurance claims.

But Property-Casualty insurance companies are fighting back. They sponsor fire fraud workshops around the country to train thousands of adjusters and claims people. They seek law changes which will remove incentives for arson and make arson easier to investigate, while protecting the privacy of the policyholder. They are testing an insurance application form designed to identify and deter

potential arson fraud. They developed a model code which makes arson a serious felony and provides appropriate penalties.

Significant operational changes in the many FAIR Plans across the country (where Property-Casualty insurance companies maintain facilities to insure high risk properties) are also making it harder for arsonists to prosper. Inspection practices and underwriting procedures are stronger. Increasingly, claims for fires of a suspicious nature are resisted. New government guidelines give FAIR Plans more flexibility in denying applications and in cancelling insurance coverage. Property owners are threatened with loss of coverage unless unsafe conditions are corrected.

Clearly, progress is being made. Society may never be able to eliminate arson, any more than it can eliminate any other serious crime.



However, through increased public concern, improved legislation, training, and the growing level of cooperation among community groups, insurance companies, fire fighters, and law enforcement authorities, we believe the crime of arson can be brought under closer control.

A national hotline now exists.  
For information on arson task forces call:  
Outside New York: 800-221-4954.  
In New York (call collect) 212-669-9200.

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**"Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter."**

Thomas Jefferson

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Romero appeared on television several times to rebut charges and attack the press. (He squeaked through the election with a mere 0.2 percent margin.)

"Nobody tells us our facts are wrong," says the *Star*'s Suarez, "but there is constant suspicion about our motives for keeping at it." Suarez's son was seriously harassed in school — in retaliation, Suarez believes, for his father's reporting. Throughout, says managing editor Frank Ramos, Scripps-Howard management has not flinched in its support for the paper.

The charges of police misconduct and official conspiracy will be fully aired when the civil suit goes to trial in 1982. Whatever the result, it is clear that Cerro Maravilla has bred a new skepticism toward the government in the Puerto Rican press.

All the same, the mainland has paid the affair little attention. With the exception of *Time* and *The New York Times*, which has run brief pieces by its Puerto Rico stringer—who happens to be Manny Suarez—the U.S. press has given little notice to the *Star*'s tenacity, or to the legal implications of its court fight.

Julia Preston

Julia Preston is a contributing editor of the *Pacific News Service*.

## Paper-pushers in the schoolyard

*Keeping cars costs money. Your battery can die or your tire go flat. What do you do? Shop the automotive ads, which run in the sports section of the Free Press. Look today for prices on new tires. List the brand of the tire and the cost. How many tire specials are offered today? Which is the best buy?*

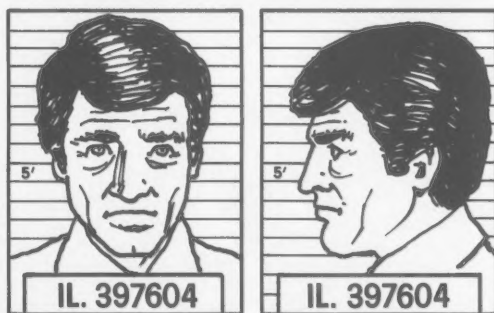
This is not an advertisement for a tire company or a page from a consumer car guide. It is, instead, a teaching aid developed by the *Detroit Free Press* for elementary schools, and is part of a nationwide campaign to sell students the idea that newspapers are not only interesting and fun, but indispensable. The program, called Newspaper in Education (NIE), is sponsored by the American Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation and is a joint effort by newspapers and schools to promote the use of papers in the classroom. Though hardly a novel idea—NIE was started more than two decades ago—the program's scope recently has greatly expanded in the face of growing competition from the electronic media. Ten years ago, 100 papers participated in the program; now, 600 newspapers deliver more than 30 million

papers a year to schools around the country.

The program's primary purpose is to get children hooked on newspapers. There has been a drop in newspaper circulation over the past five years, and surveys show that at least part of it is due to a loss of eighteen-to-thirty-four-year-old readers. While having resigned itself to that loss, the industry is determined not to let the next generation slip away. "Publishers and editors want to assure future readership," explains Julie Morse, the education director of the *Chicago Sun-Times*, which delivers papers to more than 500 schools. "And you have to get kids early to form the habit."

*Cut out the comics section from Newsday. Take this section, a pencil and a piece of paper with you for a survey of 15 or 20 people. . . . Ask the people: "What is your favorite comic strip in Newsday?" Write down what you find out. This is called "collecting data." . . . Make a class graph to show all the favorite comic strips. Send a copy of your graph to the editor of Newsday.*

The scale of NIE programs varies widely



## Crime got your town down?

State Farm has a "how to stop it" kit that more than 1,500 communities have used in local crime prevention programs. It could help your town get such a program started . . . or it may give you ideas for a story or two on the subject. For a free Crime-fighter kit, call us at 309-662-2845 or write to:



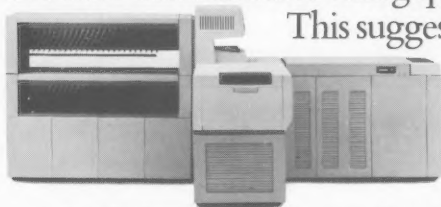
Media Information Service  
Public Relations Department  
State Farm Insurance Companies  
One State Farm Plaza  
Bloomington, IL 61701





# MOZART HAS IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY IN HEN HOUSES. NOW, WHAT CAN BE DONE FOR OFFICES?

It's been said that if you assemble an audience of chickens, sit them on nests and have them listen to string quartets, productivity will increase.



This suggests many possibilities for poultry farms, but not too many for offices.

Which is exactly our point. It's ironic that so much effort has been expended helping chickens become more productive, while productivity for office workers and executives continues to decline.

At Xerox, helping people become more productive is our business. And has been since the first Xerox copier revolutionized the way businesses reproduce information.

Today we make machines that not only copy, but also automatically collate, reduce, and even staple sets together.

Machines that let you create, store and retrieve documents much faster than humanly possible.

Machines that print out computer information much faster than ordinary computer printers.



And a special cable—called the Ethernet cable—that links office machines into a single network. So that people throughout your office can have instant access to the same information.



We even supply productivity experts to help your people make the best possible use of it all.

In fact, Xerox people, machines and services can literally save businesses millions of dollars in wasted time and effort.

That may not be Mozart. But in its own way, it can be just as enriching.

## XEROX

# Terror in the Streets

America has become a frighteningly violent land.

Washington, D.C. has a population of 650,000. Sweden and Denmark have a combined population of more than 12 million. Yet there were more criminal homicides in our nation's capital last year than in the two Scandinavian countries taken together.

New York City, with the same population as Sweden, has 20 times as many homicides. The U.S. has 100 times the burglary rate of Japan. More than one-quarter of all the households in America are victimized by some kind of criminal activity at least once a year.

Such is the grimy picture sketched by U.S. Chief Justice Warren E. Burger in an address to the American Bar Association.

Nationally, crime is on the rise in a trend that began early in 1979 after three years of stability. Terror skulks through our streets and parks, schools and suburbs.

Guns galore blaze away from both sides of the law-and-order fence. The number of handguns, both legal and illegal, is growing. More crimes are being committed with guns, and more people are arming themselves in fear and self-defense. A recent study in California reported guns in 37% of the homes.

"For at least 10 years, many of our national leaders and those of other countries have spoken of international terrorism, but our rate of casual, day-by-day terrorism in almost any large city exceeds the casualties of all the reported 'inter-

national terrorists' in any given year," Chief Justice Burger said. "Why do we show such indignation over alien terrorists and such tolerance for the domestic variety?"

Perhaps the answer is that, because there's so much crime everywhere, we've become inured to it. A decade ago, crime in the streets was a ringing public policy issue. Nowadays people seem resigned to the powerlessness of the criminal justice system to deal with it. So they hunker down in individual self-preservation, staying off the streets, double-bolting their doors, tucking pistols under their pillows, all the while losing faith in law enforcers and the courts.

The causal factors feeding the mounting tide of lawlessness are numerous and complex. They involve the interplay of the family, the schools, the courts, drugs, correctional attitudes, pressured prosecutors, and many more.

Economic causes cannot be discounted. Inflation and unemployment play their part. In recessionary times, burglaries and larcenies mushroom. The frustration of unrealized expectation kindles rage on the street. The poverty-ridden turn to crime as their only escape from hopelessness. Budget squeezes fetter law enforcement agencies and pull patrolmen off the streets.

All the more reason to get the economy rolling again so America can put more people to work, provide opportunity to the have-nots, and generate the tax revenues needed to fight crime and other social ills.

from paper to paper. Most large papers now have at least one full-time NIE coordinator, while smaller ones make do with part-time employees. Some distribute papers at no cost, others sell them to schools at a discount. (In some cases the students themselves pay.) For larger papers, school subscriptions can boost circulation substantially. The *Detroit Free Press* delivers more than a million newspapers to Michigan classrooms each year.

Papers in big cities often have highly sophisticated programs. The *Chicago Sun-Times*, with an education staff of nine, distributes fifteen curriculum guides along with its papers. It also has a student paper, special supplements, and a film-strip library. Five field representatives conduct teacher workshops and work with children in the classroom. *Newsday* sponsors newspaper plant tours, photo exhibits, and a speakers' bureau, which schedules talks with *Newsday* reporters and editors. The *Free Press* offers schools twenty-four different "educational materials," including "Using the Want Ads" and "Detroit Free Press History." It also has recently initiated a popular TV reading program, which prints the scripts of TV shows a week before they are telecast.

*What a lot of people know that you might not have known is that there's a lot more to The New York Times than heavy headlines and stock tables. Because there's a lot more to life.*

The *New York Times* has the largest program in the country, employing a twenty-four-person staff and providing as many as 130,000 papers a day to schools at just over half-price. The *Times* program, which is aimed at high school and college students, offers a vast array of guides ("How to Succeed in High School"), reprints of articles, instruction booklets ("Stocks, Bonds and Commodities: What Do All Those Numbers Mean?"), and a student weekly. The paper promotes its school sales by providing student representatives with a commission, even though this cuts into revenues. "At thirteen cents a copy, we take the loss," says Steve Santos, manager of school services. "But it's excellent p.r."

NIE directors emphasize the educational value of these programs. "We want to create an awareness among kids that newspapers are important to their lives, to understanding what's going on around them," says Linda Skover, national coordinator of the program. "Newspapers supplement textbooks in teaching math, social studies, and reading skills, for example." But it is clear that students are also learning to be avid readers of

ads, and thus future consumers. Pretend you are taking a trip to Disney World, says a *Free Press* "activity" card. "Look in the newspaper for ads on special fares to Florida." *Newsday* advises students to clip ads and articles from its Friday "Preview" section to plan a "bonus weekend." Likewise, *The New York Times* encourages students to disburse a hypothetical \$100 on activities listed in its "Weekend" section. And, making no bones about where its potential audience lies, the *Times* suggests a project for up-and-coming business-section readers: "Your parents wish to set up a trust

fund for your future. Go to your local bank and ask for information on trust funds and their options."

Newspaper executives are pleased with the program's success to date, but the Newspaper Advertising Bureau counsels against complacency in a current report: "On any given week day, about half of the teenagers 15-17 are reading a newspaper. That's a tremendous audience. But can we be satisfied with half?"

Pamela Ridder

Pamela Ridder, a New York writer, is a former research associate of the Review.

# The Livingston Awards For Young Journalists

Awarded by the  
Mollie Parnis Livingston Foundation  
of New York City

The Foundation takes pleasure in opening a competition to recognize and further develop the abilities of young journalists.

To screen applications regionally, a board of professionals has been selected who are young enough to understand the special challenges of the under-35 competition, yet too old to enter.

All decisions will be made on the basis of a single news report. In the case of a series, one segment will be considered for the prize, but up to six others may be submitted for context. Organizations or individuals may apply. The deadline for 1981 coverage entries is March 1, 1982. Detailed rules and application forms may be obtained from Charles R. Eisendrath, Executive Director, The Livingston Awards, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 48109. Telephone: (313) 764-0423.

## Three \$5,000 Prizes

will be given for the best 1981 coverage of local, national and international news by journalists aged 34 or younger in any U.S.-owned medium. Final selection of the first awards will be made by:

**Mollie Parnis Livingston**  
Chairman  
Mollie Parnis Livingston  
Foundation

**David Brinkley**  
Network Correspondent  
NBC News

**Richard M. Clurman**  
Former Chief of Correspondents  
Time-Life Publications

**Charlotte Curtis**  
Associate Editor  
The New York Times

**David Halberstam**  
Author

**Mike Wallace**  
Correspondent  
CBS News

**Barbara Walters**  
Correspondent  
ABC News

## ISSUE:

**The railroads are attempting to manipulate the news media through propaganda targeted against America's trucking industry.**

## ANSWER:

**The nation's journalists are a lot smarter than the rail industry thinks they are.**

---

Railroads have always been good at blaming their problems on someone else. First they claimed they were over-regulated and couldn't make a buck. Now, rails have the deregulation they fought so hard for and they're still complaining that things are unfair.

Their latest complaint is that trucks are "subsidized" because they use public highways to move the nation's freight.

What a phoney issue! Trucks pay for their use of the highways through state and federal taxes. And the trucking industry pays its fair share of these taxes.

The railroads deal in vague terms, complaining that all motorists suffer by having to pay a portion of the cost for roads that trucks also use.

But the facts are far from vague!

It's a fact that heavy trucks account for only one percent of vehicle registrations, yet they pay 25 percent of all federal highway taxes collected in the United States.

Trucks of all sizes make up 20 percent of the vehicles on the road but pay 50 percent of the federal taxes that support the

nation's highway system. In plain dollars and cents, the owner of a typical car pays \$33 into the Federal Highway Trust Fund, while the owner of an over-the-road tractor trailer pays 54 times that much— \$1,782. When state taxes are added, trucks pay annual taxes of \$4,572 compared to \$127 for autos.

The \$33 that a car owner pays came from the federal fuel and tire taxes. Heavy trucks pay these taxes also, but, in addition, trucks pay excise taxes on new trucks and trailers, parts and accessories, and a special truck weight tax.

It should be clear that trucks don't get a free ride. But what about the railroads? At least one U.S. Congressman estimated the federal subsidy to railroads at \$11 BILLION during the past five years alone. Now, *that's* subsidy!

The next time the railroads (or any other group) sound off about who is being "subsidized," think twice about their motives and challenge what you hear.

We will be happy to tell you what the facts really are!



News Service Department  
**American Trucking Associations, Inc.**  
1616 P Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
(202) 797-5237



## A mayor's best friend

In recent years *The Plain Dealer*, Cleveland's morning newspaper and Ohio's largest daily, has repeatedly demonstrated its solicitude for the local business community. In 1978, for instance, the paper enthusiastically supported a corporate-led campaign to recall Mayor Dennis Kucinich, who was warring with local businessmen; several months later, a reporter was taken off a series on the local private utility company when his investigation proved too controversial. (See "Cleveland 'Plain Dealer,' Pressured By Reporters, Prints a Story It Stifled," *CJR*, May/June 1979.) The paper's coverage of a referendum on an increase in Cleveland's income tax earlier this year shows *The Plain Dealer* is running true to form.

The February vote, on increasing the tax from 1.5 to 2.0 percent, was the second called by Republican Mayor George Voinovich. The first, held in November 1980, when the newly elected mayor discovered city finances were in worse shape than he had expected, lost by a wide margin. This time, the mayor's strategy was to persuade those who would pay proportionately little — senior citizens, the unemployed, inner-city blacks, the poor — to back the increase, which was generally recognized as regressive. Voinovich set in motion an elaborate pro-tax campaign — financed largely by corporate contributions — featuring threatened (and sometimes actual) cutbacks in essential services, sophisticated advertising, and mass mailings.

On January 11, in his regular Sunday column, *Plain Dealer* publisher Thomas Vail noted the need for a "hard-hitting, street-level campaign" in favor of the tax, including a dramatic presentation of the choice involved: urban revival or "four years of city tragedy, deterioration and citizen hardship." Vail added that the local news media "might be glad to devote more attention to the tax issue if the truth and consequences were more clearly pointed out to them."

Later that month, Voinovich and his top aides visited Vail's office, bearing reports, studies, statistics, and story ideas. According to Richard Willing, national correspondent for *The Detroit News*, who discussed that meeting with Vail in a post-referendum interview, the publisher offered to turn over front-page space to the mayor to say whatever he wanted in favor of the tax during the last weeks of the campaign. To Vail's surprise, the mayor declined the invitation, explaining that a low turnout would improve the chances of the tax's passage.

After discussing the paper's coverage with management, managing editor Robert McGruder assigned local government reporters Christine Jindra and Gregory Moore to do a string of daily articles on the equipment and manpower needs of city departments. Jindra and Moore proposed a week-long series; they were informed, however, that top editors wanted two weeks' worth. So, beginning February 1, they dutifully churned out a twelve-part series that played up the administration's warnings of the deteriorating condition of Cleveland's police force, fire department, medical services, parks, and almost everything else within the city's jurisdiction. An article on garbage collection, for instance, featured official claims that, if the tax measure lost, weekly collections would be abandoned, an \$8 to \$10 monthly fee would be imposed, and "vacant lots and playgrounds will become dumping grounds."

Based as it was on statements from current city officials, the series conveyed the unmistakable impression that defeat of the tax measure would leave Cleveland a dangerous, crime-ridden, unhealthy place to live. "The frustrating thing was that because so many stories had to be done, they just talked to [department] directors, but had no time to analyze how true their statements were," says one *Plain Dealer* reporter. "There was no time to really explore the issues." And, while other articles on the tax measure itself did present the views of such opponents as Kucinich and Councilman Jay Westbrook, both of whom believed the new revenues were unnecessary for maintaining existing service levels, those notes of dissent were generally lost in the urban gloom that prevailed on the *Plain Dealer*'s front page.

**T**he *Plain Dealer*'s promotional efforts sparked considerable debate among reporters. City Hall reporter Gary Clark says that the paper was "just bludgeoning people to death. It was certainly the perception of reporters working off the city desk that the *PD* was going way overboard in promoting this." Reporter Jim Parker adds that "the amount of stories run approached boosterism."

Christine Jindra says she sees nothing improper in her being assigned to find out what the city's departments said they needed. "I was not ashamed of the stories," she adds. "They weren't filled with a whole lot of boosterism. I never felt pressure to say anything in particular." And managing editor McGruder says, "I think it's proper to put questions about city services to those people responsible." McGruder adds that



**Ringin' the alarm:** The *Plain Dealer* ran photos of a crumbling bridge and rusting police car to show Clevelanders how far their city had declined



because he views city services as substandard, he saw no reason to question the accuracy of administration statements. (Gregory Moore declined to discuss the series he co-authored.)

In the end, the mayor's campaign, backed by the *Plain Dealer*'s warnings of urban collapse, proved effective. The tax increase was approved by 62 percent of those voting. *The Plain Dealer* described the vote as a "great triumph." Oddly, the paper did not mention that about 5,000 fewer persons voted for the measure this time than in November 1980; it passed, in part, because many opponents stayed home.

The media's efforts on behalf of the increase were noted by Joe Wagner, politics editor of the *Cleveland Press* and a former reporter for *The Plain Dealer*. With an obvious nod in the direction of his former employer, he wrote, "We did a lot of pom-pom waving for Voinovich that probably made our old journalism instructors wonder if we slept through their lectures about the perils of advocacy journalism."

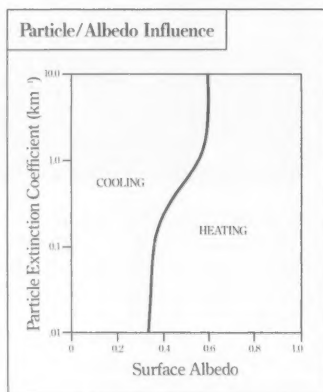
The mayor was grateful for the help offered him. Soon after the vote, he approached Gregory Moore in the *PD* newsroom, shook his hand, and said "thanks."

Dan Marschall

Dan Marschall, who lives in Cleveland, is former research coordinator for the city's Division of Economic Development.

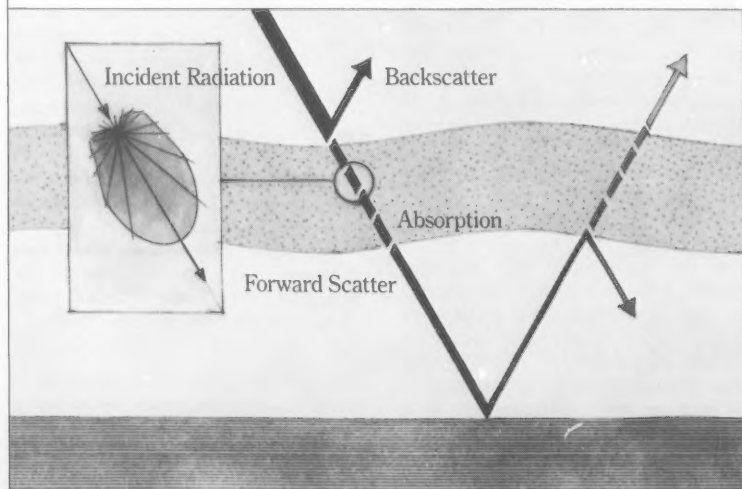
# The Albedo Effect

*Mathematical models of the atmosphere are the chief scientific tools for predicting long-term climate and identifying possible climatic changes that may result from man's activities. Recent advances at the General Motors Research Laboratories have revealed new information about the contribution of airborne particles to the delicate thermal balance of the earth's atmosphere.*



Regions of heating and cooling determined by particle characteristics and surface albedo.

Radiation scattering exhibited by a layer of particles. The inset shows the distribution of scattering by a single particle of mean size.



**D**EVOID of its atmosphere, the bare earth would reach an average temperature of only  $-1^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Atmospheric interaction with solar and terrestrial radiation raises the average surface temperature to fifteen degrees Celsius, making life as we know it possible. Small fluctuations in overall temperature can have large-scale effects. It is believed that a drop of a few degrees Celsius lasting for a period as short as four years could trigger an ice age. Fundamental studies conducted at the General Motors Research Laboratories explore the effect of various atmospheric factors, natural and man-made, on the earth's thermal balance.

New knowledge of the influence of airborne particles on the earth's thermal balance has

been revealed by investigations carried out by Dr. Ruth Reck. Dr. Reck's work at General Motors integrated for the first time the complex factor of particles into radiative-convective atmospheric models. Her findings help determine under what conditions particles have a cooling influence, and under what conditions they have a heating influence.

Airborne particles have many sources: volcanic issue, wind-raised dust and sea salt, ash, soot, direct and indirect products of combustion and industrial processing, the products of the decay of plant and animal life, the liquid droplets and ice crystals that make up clouds. Particles alter the radiation flow in the atmosphere by the processes of scattering and absorption. Particles differ by size and composition, factors which determine optical properties.

Prior to Dr. Reck's work, models for calculating the vertical temperature profile included layers of clouds and the significant gases— $\text{O}_2$ ,  $\text{O}_3$ ,  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  and  $\text{CO}_2$ —but neglected the particle factor. To establish the thermal effect of particles, later models assumed a uniform vertical temperature change.

Dr. Reck's contribution was to add the particle factor to a one-dimensional model developed at the Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory at Princeton University. This model divides the atmosphere into nine layers. An initial temperature distribution is assumed, and the model is used to compute the net radiative energy

flow into or out of each layer. A particle population is input for each layer. Calculated radiation imbalances result in a temperature change for each layer within the model, subject to the condition that change in temperature with altitude not exceed the adiabatic lapse rate. The new temperatures are used to compute a new radiation balance. This process is repeated until there are no further changes in temperature.

The particles of interest, known as Mie-scattering aerosols, are comparable in size to the wavelength of the incident radiation. Dr. Reck models the interaction of these particles with the radiation field in terms of two parameters: the single scattering albedo of the particle, which describes backscatter, and an anisotropic scattering factor, which measures the degree of forward scatter. From these two quantities and the size distribution and abundance of the particles, the transmission, absorption and backscatter of each layer in the model can be calculated.

**D**R. RECK discovered that whether particles have a heating or cooling influence depends upon the surface albedo, or reflective power, of the earth directly beneath them. Snow (0.6) is more reflective than sand (0.3); water is less reflective than either (0.07). Her results indicate that when surface albedo is small, the net effect of particles is to "shield" the earth from incoming solar radi-

ation, producing a cooling influence. When surface albedo is large, a trapping effect prevails, in which the portion of solar radiation that reaches the earth's surface is "trapped" between the surface and the particles, producing a net heating influence. The competition between these two effects, shielding and trapping, determines the overall thermal influence of particles.

Dr. Reck calculated that for the latitudes between the equator and 35°N, where average surface albedo is low, the current background level of atmospheric particles decreases solar radiation reaching the earth by ~1%, thus producing a net cooling effect. Her findings indicate that heating takes place at latitudes north of 55°N, where average surface albedo is high. Calculations with the model indicate a correlation between the increase in particle abundance due to volcanic activity in 1970 and a subsequent ice build-up in 1971.

"Previous models did not adequately take into account the role played by particles in the earth's thermal balance," says Dr. Reck. "The geosystem is continually changing. It is important for us to understand the elements that affect this evolution, so that we may know how man's activities influence the atmosphere."

## THE WOMAN BEHIND THE WORK

Dr. Ruth Reck is a Staff Research Scientist in the Physics Department at the General Motors Research Laboratories.

Dr. Reck received her Ph.D. in physical chemistry from the University of Minnesota. Her thesis, on the statistical mechanics of heterogeneous systems, concerned the theory of diffusion-controlled chemical reactions. Prior to joining General Motors in 1965, she was a Research Associate in the Applied Mathematics Department of Brown University.

In addition to global climate studies, Dr. Reck has done research at General Motors in solid state physics and magnetic materials. Over the last seven years, she has participated in several international exchange programs on climate-related subjects.



## General Motors

People building transportation to serve people

# Babies, Strikes and Compulsory Unionism Don't Mix.

**M**arlene Swanson, R.N., is a dedicated nurse who takes care of newborn babies, many of them premature, most of them black and Hispanic, and all of them in need, at a community hospital outside Providence, Rhode Island.

When an illegal strike was called, Marlene refused to join it. She crossed the picket line and reported to work because, as she says, "Nurses take the Hippocratic oath too, like doctors. I felt a moral responsibility to those infants."

Angry union officials immediately retaliated. Marlene, along with the other nurses at the hospital, had been forced to join the union to keep her job. This compulsory union membership, union officials claimed, made all nurses subject to fines for any disobedience of their decisions.

They charged Marlene Swanson with violating union by-laws, held a sham "trial," and fined her \$250 for taking care of her infant patients during the strike. When Marlene appealed the fine to the union membership, they increased it to \$300!

An undaunted Marlene refused to pay the fine, and the union took her to court. At first, she didn't know where to turn for the legal help she urgently needed. After all, she was just one member against the entire Rhode Island State Nurses Association.

Then she remembered reading about William F. Buckley, Jr.'s legal battle against a union, and called his office. She was referred to the National Right to Work Legal Defense

Foundation, which agreed to provide counsel.

A defense was prepared and presented so effectively that the union suggested the case could be settled out of court if Marlene would give the fine to charity. She flatly refused "because a lot of other nurses were watching to see what happened to me. I could not admit I was guilty of anything."

A judge of the Rhode Island Superior Court emphatically agreed, handing down a directed verdict against the union and for Marlene Swanson. Judge Clifford J. Cawley ruled that state public policy was quite clear that strikes by nurses were illegal, and that it is the "zenith of asininity" to fine anyone for failure to take part in an illegal strike.

The importance of Marlene's victory became quickly apparent. When another illegal strike occurred at the hospital, not just one, but 18 nurses crossed the picket line, putting their patients first and their union second.

Marlene Swanson was fortunate. She received experienced legal help in a case that lasted nearly two years. She would not have won and established an important principle—that nurses cannot be compelled to participate in an illegal strike—without that expert legal assistance.

The National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation is helping everyone it can—currently in more than 100 cases involving illegal union political spending, violations of academic and political freedom, union violence, and

other abuses of basic employee rights.

If you'd like to help people like Marlene Swanson, we'd like to hear from you.

The National Right to Work Legal  
Defense Foundation  
8001 Braddock Road  
Springfield, Virginia 22160





# CAPITAL LETTER

by ROBERT M. KAUS

## On the RIF beat

60,000 U.S. EMPLOYEES MAY LOSE JOBS read a three-column headline on the front page of *The Washington Post* last February. It was news calculated to gladden the hearts of taxpayers who hoped Reagan would "cut the government down to size." Within weeks, area congressmen were predicting "Reductions in Force" — RIFs — that would lay off up to 30,000 federal workers in the D.C. area alone.

Well, don't look now, but that impressive 30,000 figure has, as of this late-May writing, dwindled to a measly 4,000 or so, and may shrink further. How do I know this? Not from reading the national news section of the *Post*. Instead, I picked it up from an authoritative source, little known outside of Washington — that is to say, I read it in Mike Causey's "Federal Diary" column, buried in its traditional slot inside the *Post*'s Metro section, right next to the national weather map and the Maryland lottery number. "[The] closest the typical Washington area bureaucrat will come to a RIF," Causey reported on May 19, "is when he or she reads about it in the newspaper."

For decades, "Federal Diary" and its counterpart in *The Washington Star* have reported the nuts and bolts of how successive administrations have tried to run the federal machine. These are the issues that more official Washingtonians get excited over than any others — not human rights or nuclear proliferation, but SEMIANNUAL RAISES TO SURVIVE SENATE, WHITE HOUSE CAGEY ON PAID PARKING, and RETIREMENT AT AGE 43 STARTS AT 3 AGENCIES. But the "civil service columns" serve more than civil servants. When Jimmy Carter launched his well-publicized personnel reforms, it was the columnists who kept track of the fine print as, stage by stage, Carter's proposals were eviscerated to placate federal unions.

Of course, that's not quite the way Causey, or Philip Shandler of the *Star*, would put it. Their diligent reporting is colored by their need not to offend their civil-servant readers. PAY U.S. EXECUTIVES WHAT THEY ARE WORTH read the head of a recent Causey column sympathizing with the plight of \$50,000-a-year federal officials who must cling to their posts out of "the desire to eat regularly," but who do not "feel like giving their best" because they regard their pay as inadequate.

Similarly, Causey and Shandler have both reported on the intricate regulations governing RIFs — regulations whose complexity is undoubtedly one reason the administration may have shied away from large-scale layoffs. But you didn't catch either columnist speculating on why federal bureaucrats might have written regulations that make it hard to sack federal bureaucrats. That's where we lazy Washington government-watchers come in — decanting the facts from obscure Causey columns, adding a twist of opinion, and serving them up in *The Washington Monthly*, *National Journal*, or *The New Republic* as authoritative editorializing on the bureaucracy.

That may change, because the bureaucratic beat is getting sexier. Last year the *Star* moved Shandler to the first section and added one of its most respected writers, Tom Dowling, to cover the bureaucratic beat in a flashier companion column called "Federal Cases." Now the *Post* is weighing in with its new front-section "Federal Page," which has attracted one of the paper's young stars, T. R. Reid, as its editor. Reid sees his task as simply reporting "what those 2.9 million people are doing every day." Bad news for those of us who would prefer that such information be buried on page B-2. Good news for the public, which will presumably be given fresh analysis of the whole spectrum of bureaucratic activities.

Or will it? There are reasons to doubt.

Perceptions of the federal bureaucracy, I have found, differ sharply depending almost entirely on whether you've worked for it lately. Reporters are no exception to this rule; the question is whether the new generation of federal reporters will have the inclination, born of experience, to criticize the myriad little fictions religiously preserved by the bureaucrats — and left unquestioned by Causey and Shandler.

For example, when Reagan took over, the press officers at the Office of Personnel Management saw an opportunity to publicize the wondrous impact of the new, heavily bonused "Senior Executive Service." Soon there was T. R. Reid, on the *Post* front page, reporting that Reagan could now "replace many career bureaucrats with people committed to the new administration's programs." In fact, nine out of every ten Senior Executives are "career" bureaucrats who can *not* be fired — only shuffled around within agencies, while their old jobs are filled by other unfirable "career" bureaucrats. Someone who had actually spent time among the SESers, I think, would have been a bit slower to swallow the official line that portrayed them as gung-ho risk takers, ready to clean out their lockers with each change in administration.

## Bad vibes

Gonzo journalist Hunter S. Thompson, commissioned by Bantam Books to write a screed on the first 100 days of the Reagan Era, journeyed here in late March, but fled after a week, citing a "grim" atmosphere that prevailed even before the assassination attempt on March 30. "The only people I felt I could have fun with," said Thompson, back at his Woody Creek, Colorado, home, "were Jim Brady and Alexander Haig." Understandably, the Doctor was having trouble arranging an appointment with either of them. ■



# **Let's have disposable retirement income, not disposable retirees.**

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<sup>2</sup>Social Security was never

intended to be more than a basic system supplemented by private pensions and individual savings. The price for forgetting this has been high and promises to get higher: combined employer/employee FICA taxes on our grandchildren's salaries could reach 25%. Of course, there are alternatives. Social Security could increase the official retirement age,

pay benefits based on government-determined need, or simply ... *reduce benefits in general!*

<sup>3</sup>Two-thirds of small businesses surveyed in 1978 offered no pension plans at all. One reason: Typically, big employers can write off 46¢ in taxes for every pension dollar they contribute, while most small ones can only write off about 20¢. In some cases,

they can't write off anything.

<sup>4</sup>Our real estate and participating mortgage separate accounts, for example, are designed to offer larger returns in the face of double-digit inflation. We've also helped fund the Pension Research Council's study of pensions and inflation.



## PUBLISHER'S NOTES

### 'The Lower case'

Despite inflation and crises, the sense of humor of journalism professionals and buffs is standing up admirably. Volunteered items are streaming in for the *Review*'s "Lower case" page, which features headlines and other items that say things the writers didn't intend. Some of the items come from colleagues of the perpetrators; occasionally the perpetrator himself will send one in.

Meanwhile, *Squad Helps Dog Bite Victim*, the little book collecting the best of nineteen years of "The Lower case," has gone into its fourth printing (after a foul-up when the book's publisher ran out of copies a month before Christmas and didn't manage a reprinting until weeks afterward).

You can now buy copies in most major bookstores. Or send a check for \$4.50 per copy directly to "Squad," *Columbia Journalism Review*, 700-A Journalism Building, Columbia University, New York, N.Y. 10027.

### Thanks, Mother

This column has sometimes disagreed with the alert editors of *Mother Jones* magazine, but it thanks that publication for its forthrightness in writing in its June 1981 issue: "A year ago, we wrote in this space about the firing of an editor at the *Columbia Journalism Review* for what appeared to be political reasons. In concluding, we made all sorts of dire predictions about the magazine's future. Time has proven us quite wrong, and we owe *CJR* a bow of apology and a whistle-blast of praise."

### Ad standards

Recently an enterprising ad firm came to the *Review* with an intriguing proposition. It proposed our joining in soliciting twelve-page or even twenty-four-page advertising sections from governments that feel a need to improve their images in America. Several publications cater-

ing to journalists signed up. The *Review* felt it had to draw a line. It stipulated that it couldn't accept such sections from any government known to imprison journalists and others critical of that government. A one-pager dealing with a particular subject might be acceptable on grounds of free speech, but it would seem highly inappropriate to have an issue almost dominated by a multi-page insert sponsored by a government that flagrantly violates press freedom and human rights. Question for readers: Do you agree?

### Re: N.Y. Times

Hardly a week goes by without some reader inquiring whether the *Review* isn't too preoccupied with *The New York Times*, and adding something like, "After all, there are other parts of the country." A smaller number, often members of the *Times* staff, ask whether the *Review* isn't too critical of that newspaper, as in the article in the last issue faulting the *Times* for the "bullishness" of its business coverage.

Basically, the answer in each case is that this happens because *The New York Times*, whatever its flaws, is the domi-

nant newspaper in the United States. Time and again it shows up in surveys of newspaper people as "the most respected" newspaper, surpassing such rivals as *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal* and the *Los Angeles Times*. It is also the single newspaper most widely read by journalists. To a surprising degree, *Times*-originated stories are followed up by radio and television networks in their major news roundups, and often by the three major news magazines.

Much of this follow-the-leader pattern is justified. Some of it, in our opinion, is not, and is more a reflection of habit or sometimes downright laziness.

In any event, a major journalism review would be negligent if it did not devote considerable attention to a newspaper that has such influence on the thinking and the content of American journalism as a whole.

Let it be said once and for all that *The New York Times* is a great newspaper, one of the world's greatest, but that it has its faults, sometimes serious faults, which should be criticized whenever appropriate. Moreover, such criticism, when justified, can have ripple effects on much of American journalism.

### In brief

□ One reader chides this column for commending Carol Burnett and Johnny Carson for their "counterattacks against the shabby gossip-mongering of the *National Enquirer*." Some day, he argues, the *Review*, "in some political climate in some courtroom, may be perceived as shabby." Granted. Moreover, our item was written before the colossal award in the Burnett case, which, as the reader suggests, may well have been excessive. But we still believe that kind of journalism should not go unchallenged.

□ We note that the renewal rate among regular *Review* subscribers has reached a new high of 76 percent, which is extraordinary in the magazine business.

□ With this issue, we welcome a new business manager. He is Charles C. Post, for the last four years business manager of *The Washington Monthly*.

E.W.B.



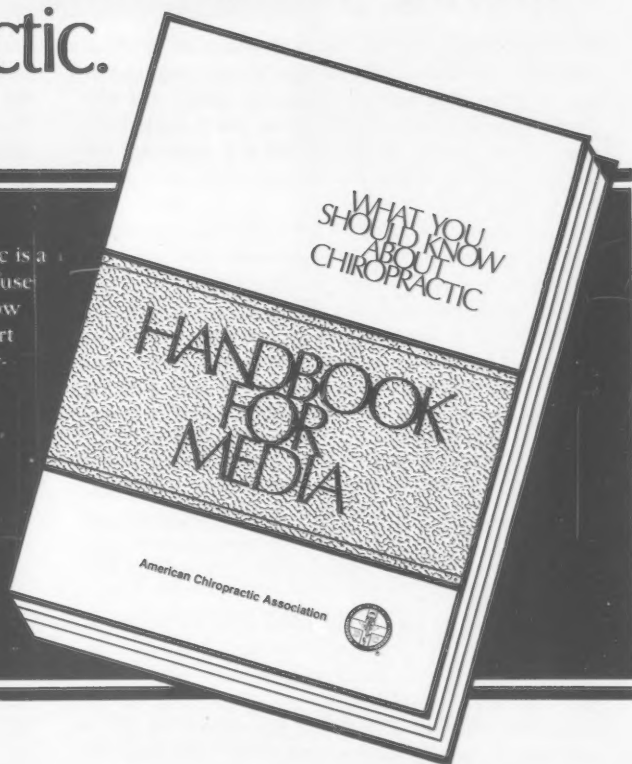
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# COMMENT

## Exploring 'Jimmy's world'

Newspaper hoaxes and the faking of quotes are as old as newspapers themselves. But the story of the young reporter who invented eight-year-old Jimmy the addict, and who thereby won and lost a Pulitzer Prize, has a distinctively contemporary quality. It can be read as a cautionary tale about a significant change that has been taking place in the way newspaper reporters and editors see their jobs.

That change is by no means all for the bad. For twenty years or so, reporters on *The Washington Post* and other newspapers have been at pains to go beyond the chronicling of daily happenings on clearly defined beats, and to report on how groups of people — women, blacks, migrant workers, singles in suburbia, illegal Mexican immigrants, residents of particular neighborhoods — live, and how they feel about their lives. Journalists have become anthropologists, and works of anthropology are held up as models for students at journalism schools. The results have often been impressive. Indeed, there should be more reporting of this kind; it is a common complaint of people in neighborhoods like Miami's Liberty City that the news media, sixteen years after the burning of Watts, still carry news of the ghetto only when it is sensational.

But reporting on the lives of young drug addicts, or illegal immigrants, or alcoholic executives, or people who live in Harlem, say, or Houston or Beverly Hills, makes heavy demands on the integrity and judgment of the reporter. For, with rare exceptions, the reporter can get at such stories only by interviewing people who insist on anonymity, and he is compelled, moreover, to travel the dangerous road that leads from particular facts and quotes and observations to the generalizations without which the story would have little point. And there are bound to be reporters who, out of laziness or frustration or ambition, will stretch the facts or invent incidents and anecdotes to demonstrate the "truth" about a community or group.

A praiseworthy, if risky, determination to extend the range of daily journalism does not by itself, however, account for the invention of little Jimmy. As Gerald Fraser eloquently argues on page 35, the Jimmy story was in part a product of racial stereotyping, pandering as it did to white perceptions of life in the black ghetto. But another factor was at work as well. As newspapers have lost readers to television, editors have felt impelled to give readers more of what they regularly get on the tube. To make the news more like television (and movies), editors have allowed reporters to reconstruct dialogue, and to construct supposedly real-

life dramas in which the protagonists are unidentified, or are composites of real people, like characters in a novel. And as the dramatic — and true — story of Janet Cooke and the Pulitzer Prize demonstrates, even so generally tough-minded a newspaper as *The Washington Post* has been infected by the debilitating virus of journalistic hype. Indeed, the virus of hype not only suppressed the skepticism that the editors should have brought to bear on the story of little Jimmy; its damaging effects could also be seen, as James Boylan points out in an essay beginning on this page, in the *Post's* own postmortem.

Few in the business of writing or editing nonfiction, including the editors of the *Review*, can honestly say they have never yielded to the temptation of going with a good story even though its documentation left something to be desired. But the birth and death of Jimmy may serve to arm us against the seductions of that "higher truth" consisting of what reporters and editors believe — and desire — to be true, but which they lack the evidence to prove. If nothing else, the public's skepticism about what it reads in the newspapers should provide a powerful motive for reform. It will be interesting to take a look a year or so from now, as the *Review* intends to do, at what changes have been made to lay the ghost of Jimmy.

In the meantime, as a modest contribution to the discussions that are no doubt still going on in newsrooms around the country, the *Review* offers in the following pages a selection of comments and reflections on some of the questions raised by the story of Jimmy. The writers deal with, among other things, the influence of television commercials on journalism, the racial implications of the Cooke affair, and how the press handled the story. The contributions were solicited by the *Review*; the opinions are the authors' own.

## The ombudsman's tale

by JAMES BOYLAN

One way newspapers used to deal with a major misstep was to disregard it. Another was to create a diversion. When William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal* aroused public anger because it had published some musings about the killing of public officials not long before McKinley's assassination, Hearst, undaunted, changed the name of his paper to the *American*, which not only showed his patrio-

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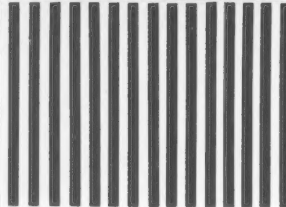
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tism but deprived the public of its target.

A new way is for the newspaper to come clean, to confess all at obsessive length, not only to show readers that it is at heart a decent and conscientious institution, but also to demonstrate that in surveying the misdeeds of our society it does not overlook itself. It is thus important for the newspaper in a tight spot that the confession be solid gold — that it represent the most thorough, the best-documented, the most convincing journalism that the organization is capable of producing.

Although there have been many routine mea culpas in recent years, I can recall only three on the grand scale. Two were published in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. One, under the old Annenberg ownership, was the recounting in 1967 of the con games played by a rogue reporter, Harry Karafin, at the expense of the reputation of the newspaper; the story was written by an estimable reporter, Joseph C. Goulden. Under the current Knight-Ridder ownership, the *Inquirer* was forced to explain the relationship between one of its political reporters, Laura Foreman, and a state senator, Henry J. Cianfrani, who happened to be bound for jail; this story, in 1977, was handled by an *Inquirer* investigative team, Donald L. Barlett and James B. Steele.

Now we have *The Washington Post*, recounting this past April 19 how it happened that Janet Cooke's story, "Jimmy's World," rose from its humble origins in the District Weekly to become a Pulitzer Prize winner, if only for a fleeting moment. To handle this critical matter the *Post* turned to its ombudsman. The ombudsman, on the possibly 1.5 percent of American daily newspapers that are equipped with one, is a semidetached employee hired to help the newspaper through tight places by producing publishable criticism of the paper's actions. The *Post* incumbent, Bill Green (who identifies himself as an administrator on leave from Duke University), wrote that he took on the Janet Cooke case "after being invited to do so by The Washington Post's executive editor, Ben Bradlee." To have been assigned, he explained, "would have violated the relationship The Post has maintained with its ombudsmen . . . ." After taking on the job, Green withstood the attempt by twenty *Post* reporters to help with the project. It was, he asserted, a "one-man undertaking."

It was also carried out in a considerable hurry. Although the exact time of Bradlee's invitation is not revealed, it probably could not have come much earlier than Wednesday morning, April 15, when Bradlee broke the news of Cooke's confession of hoaxery to the publisher, Donald Graham. If copy for the Sunday paper (in which the Green account appeared) had to be ready by early Saturday evening, then Green had possibly eighty-four hours in which not only to obtain the forty-seven interviews he claims, but to write 18,000 words as well, an average, day and night, around the clock, of just short of 215 words an hour. (If one

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James Boylan, the Review's founding editor, teaches journalism at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst.

reads carefully, of course, one sees that he does not really claim to have done the interviews.)

By coincidence, Barlett and Steele's 1977 article for the *Inquirer* ran to almost the same length — 17,000 words. However, Barlett and Steele were not in Green's league. They spent a full six weeks in preparing their story, and therefore averaged only about seventeen words an hour of copy.

Either the *Post* or its ombudsman must have been eager to put "Jimmy's World" behind it. If that was the objective, the strategy seems to have succeeded to a great degree. Press summaries of Green's account picked up his suitably tough-sounding conclusions and his suitably generous apportionment of blame.

But these ritual conclusions are not the heart of the story; the heart of the story is the story — the purportedly complete account of what actually happened inside the *Post* before, during, and after the crisis. That this account was offered — and generally accepted — as authoritative may, in fact, show that the same infection that permitted publication and honors for Janet Cooke's story is still at large in the *Post* and a good many other places as well.

The account has two main flaws: its unremitting home-team psychology and its failure of authentication in its most critical moments.

The story is framed as if for a sequel to *All the President's Men* or, at the least, a juicy episode of *Lou Grant*. As Alan Richman wrote in *The Boston Globe* on April 22: "Nearly everybody at the *Post* comes off sounding like a

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What is important is to get the story right and then put it into readable form. The technique shouldn't lead to any distortion of the facts or the truth. It takes very talented writers to be able to combine the reporting and the literary techniques. That's why you get a lot of half-baked young reporters using these techniques claiming to be practicing New Journalism, when all they're doing is inventing things.

Clay Felker,  
quoted in *The Wall Street Journal*,  
May 14, 1981

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Hollywood hero. . . . Compassion and nobility sweep through the newsroom. . . . Nobody is derelict or dumb. Everybody is brilliant." In Green's script, Bradlee is characterized as "resplendent," Bob Woodward, the metropolitan editor, as "tough, determined and persistent," and Milton Coleman, the city editor, as pursuing news "as though it's his quarry." Ultimately, Green concludes the seventeen theses he nails to the end of the story thus: "The *Post* is one of the very few great enterprises in journalism, and everybody associated with it ought to be proud of it."

As Richman asks, how can a true investigation exist in such a setting? Had such standards been applied to Watergate, says Richman, "A senior editor would have

been dispatched to the White House shortly after the break-in. He would have apologetically approached President Nixon, informed him that persons associated with his administration had been caught in an illegal act and accepted Nixon's apology."

It is true: there is a surfeit of confessions and apologies, but a paucity of specific culpability. Yet the account could perhaps have survived its partiality if it had offered a believable inside account.

Up to a point, it does. In the early stages, when "Jimmy's World" is growing from embryo to monster, normal forms of attribution are used; documents and interviewees

**Ms. Cooke, thought *Pravda*, should be sent to the USSR. Her talent, it declared, was just the one American editors sought for the Moscow assignment.**

Claudia Wright,  
*New Statesman*, May 1, 1981

are quoted or paraphrased. But as the denouement is approached — that is, after Janet Cooke's credentials are questioned and the *Post* sets out to obtain a confession from her — the story grows firmer in tone and shakier in documentation.

Late in the afternoon of April 14, after the first flaws in Cooke's résumé have surfaced, Cooke and Coleman are said to have been sent out of the office and to have gone to the Capitol Hilton for ginger ales. There follows a colloquy in which Janet Cooke is quoted directly six times. There is no attribution. Perhaps Coleman is the obvious source (Cooke declined to talk with Green), and he may have reconstructed the dialogue later when interviewed. But here it is told like a scene from a novel, as if the omnipresent Green had been sitting at (or under) that same table, sipping a ginger ale of his own.

The scene then moves to the "vacant eighth-floor office of the *Post*'s corporate president." This section of the narrative runs for about thirty-seven column inches and is the heart of the tale, chronicling, as it does, Cooke's breakdown and confession. At various times between 6:30 p.m. and the early morning hours, Cooke, Coleman, Bradlee, Woodward, Tom Wilkinson (assistant managing editor for personnel), and David Maraniss (deputy metropolitan editor) are shown to be present. But not one of them is listed as a source for any part of this section; in fact, no sources are offered. Nor is there any evidence that Green himself was present or that the *Post* had installed a Nixonian taping system. Yet the account overflows with direct quotation and telling detail. Here is the climax, when all but two persons have left the room:

Maraniss sat alone with Cooke. Both were weeping. He held her hand.

"I was afraid I was going to be left alone with you," Cooke said. "The first time I saw you today I thought, 'Oh boy, he knows, and I'm going to have to tell him.' I never would tell

Woodward. The more he yelled, the more stubborn I was. Wilkinson represents the corporation. It means so much to Milton. You guys are smart, Woodward for the mind, you for the heart. Why were you smiling?"

"Because," said Maraniss, "I had a tremendous surge of empathy for you, refusing to submit to the institution in an absurd situation. You were so strong not to give in. The institution will survive."

"Oh, David, what am I going to do?" Cooke asked. . . .

"I didn't think I had a chance," she said. "There were so many other great stories."

"You can recover and you will," Maraniss told her.

"The only thing I can do is write," Cooke said.

Then he said, "You don't have to say anything to the others, I'll do it for you. What do I tell them?"

"There is no Jimmy and no family," she said. "It was a fabrication. I did so much work on it, but it's a composite. I want to give the prize back."

The touch is familiar — this way of describing with certainty scenes of which there is no true documentary record and at which perhaps the narrator has not even been present. For example:

Nixon got down on his knees. Kissinger felt he had no alternative but to kneel down, too. The President prayed out loud, asking for help, rest, peace and love. How could a President and a country be torn apart by such small things?

What else but *The Final Days*, the Woodward and Bernstein exercise in reconstruction?

For the attentive reader, the Cooke-Maraniss scene is seriously flawed because the writer has not come clean. He

**Prize-giving has never been an exact science. But the Pulitzer board has turned it into an annual exchange of presents among the top bananas of American journalism. And no wonder. For virtually all of its sixty-four-year history, the board comprised twelve members noted largely for the size of their mastheads and the limit of their vision.**

*The Nation*, May 2, 1981

has not conceded that people under stress may not remember quotations exactly. He has not conceded that, as in *Rashomon*, there may be varying sincere accounts of the same incident. Here there are direct quotations in the mouth of a person with whom the writer did not speak, and from a source — obviously Maraniss — who could hardly have been taking extensive notes during a scene of such emotional pitch.

Is this applying too literal a standard? What is wrong with a direct quotation that is not clearly contradicted by other evidence? The main thing that is wrong is the setting. Here is where the *Post*, in its own self-interest, should have demanded the utmost clarity and precision of attribution and documentation. Instead, it has fudged.

For contrast, I offer a critical moment from Barlett and Steele — when an *Inquirer* reporter, Jan Schaffer, learned that Laura Foreman had told federal agents she had received

gifts from Senator Cianfrani and might be called to testify if he were brought to trial:

On Aug. 9, Ms. Schaffer reported the confidential information to her superior, John Carroll, the metropolitan editor.

She recalled that Carroll seemed "dismayed" by the news and buried his head in his hands "for what seemed like an endless time, but I'm sure it was only three to four minutes."

"He finally looked up," Ms. Schaffer said, "and said something to the effect: 'I guess this is all my fault. I never felt I had any business questioning the sex lives of my reporters.'"

... it was decided to contact Wendell Rawls [another reporter] to see whether Rawls had any knowledge of the gifts. . . .

Carroll located Rawls on vacation in New Orleans and as Rawls recalled the telephone conversation:

"He (Carroll) said the paper understood the FBI had talked to her and that she had said something about receiving presents from him. That's when I told him about the fur coat, the plants, the jewelry, the tires on the car (that Cianfrani gave Ms. Foreman)."

Rawls said he first learned about the fur coat in 1976 while he and Ms. Foreman were still on *The Inquirer's* staff. The first time he saw the coat, he said, was this past winter in Washington, after she had joined the *New York Times*. . . .

This may strike readers as plodding, even clumsy. But it obviously had a purpose: to let the reader know the source of each assertion and the degree of confidence with which it was offered. There is no attempt to stitch it all into a seamless, sourceless web.

Another example of similar care, chosen at random from a larger body of work:

In addition to Shipley, Roger Lee Nixt of Dennison [sic], Iowa, and Kenneth Griffiths of Atlanta, Ga., said they turned down similar offers from Segretti, with whom they served in Vietnam. Both declined to discuss the offers in detail, but they acknowledged that Segretti had told them they would be engaged in sub rosa activities — similar to those described by Shipley — to aid President Nixon's re-election.

Still another lawyer who served with Segretti in Vietnam, Peter Dixon of San Francisco, also said Segretti made an offer. However, Dixon said he told Segretti "No thanks" before any details of the job were revealed. "I said, 'Gee, Don, I'm not interested in political matters, and I'm not a Republican anyway,'" said Dixon.

And so on. It's a little tedious, but it is what Woodward and Bernstein were writing in the *Post* in October 1972, when it really counted a great deal, and long before the semi-gloss that was applied to *All the President's Men*.

**W**hat has been going on since 1972? How is it that a Janet Cooke can make her story fly on verisimilitude — the beigeness of the furniture, the hipness of the quotes? How is it that the *Post*, pressed to show that its values lie at the opposite pole, instead falls into the same practice — reconstruction, nonattribution, the story without warts?

Some commentators have attributed such practices to the New Journalism. It may in fact represent a reversion to a very old journalism that told the story for the story's sake;

much of it was called yellow. There is also a tradition in journalism of trying to provide convincing documentation and authentication. The conflict between these traditions separated serious muckrakers from sensationalists seventy-five years ago. The question now is whether even major press institutions can still recognize the division. Nowhere in his seventeen conclusions does Green deal squarely with the problem of authentication in journalism. He deals with newsroom competitiveness, with use of anonymous sources, with the abuse of prizes, with personnel policies. But what about truth in journalism?

## Post-objectivity

by RON POWERS

There is little question that not only the Pulitzer Prize, but two great newspapers — *The Washington Post* and the *New York Daily News* — are casualties of two reporters who manipulated "the truth."

But without apologizing on behalf of Janet Cooke or Michael Daly, it seems at least fair to ask a deeper question: to what extent were these two young journalists themselves casualties of our culture's routine manipulation of "the truth"?

A quotation from Michael Daly — it appeared in the *Daily News's* own story of his resignation — keeps running through my mind.

Daly told reporter Jane Perlez that the technique in his disputed column was no different from what he had used in "300 columns over two years. The question of reconstruction and using a pseudonym — I've done a lot of it. No one has ever said anything."

A lot of people have done "a lot of it," and Michael Daly knows that, and his editors know it, and we all know it. Gail Sheehy and Gay Talese became pop-cultural celebrities doing it. But the New Journalism is not the full answer to this question of reconstruction. In its emphasis on the *effect*, the emotional impact of an account (or claim), the New Journalism merely derives from other processes that have intensified in the media for at least a generation.

Each process has directly influenced the rearrangement of the terms of "truth." The major ones include:

- ☐ The decline of "objectivity" as an accepted standard.
- ☐ The rise of motivational research as a tool for measuring the effect of communication styles and claims.
- ☐ The re-emergence (after a 500-year hiatus) of voice-carried information — this time transmitted on the broadcast airwaves.

The ebbing preeminence of "objectivity" is a twice-told tale for working press and public alike. "Objective" journalism enjoyed a 130-year run in America. Dating from the egalitarian penny-press revolution of the 1830s, it was in fact a strategic attempt to expand circulation by detaching the newspaper from a political-partisan base. With con-

Ron Powers, novelist and Pulitzer Prize-winning critic, is the author of *Toot-Toot-Tootsie, Good-bye*.

spicuous exceptions, newspapers began to present themselves as Unmoved Onlookers, able to gather facts from the world without themselves being affected by the nature of these facts.

The 1960s blew this grand illusion to bits. "Objective" coverage of events from Vietnam to a police assault on a Black Panther apartment in Chicago illuminated the hypocrisies and the mandarin ideologies that could be concealed

... The *Post* is unquestionably a great newspaper . . . But the *Post's* Ivy League boot camp of a newsroom runs on a mixture of hubris and 'creative tension,' encouraging internal competition among reporters and departments for the big, sensational stunner of a story. It was the spark of psychopathology that finally ignited the mixture, but the eagerness with which the *Post* had embraced glamour and fame was responsible for the extent of the damages.

*The New Republic*, May 2, 1981

in "objective" newspapers. Editors' unquestioned acceptance of official versions of these events infuriated certain critically-minded reporters and writers. Moving to countercultural journals or starting their own magazines, they founded a new advocacy era, one that reactivated the literary tradition that has hovered on the edges of American newspapers.

As the countercultural era receded, this subjective/literary style found its way back into the pages of mainstream newspapers. Jimmy Breslin, Pete Hamill, Mike Royko lent it the prestige of their established reputations. "Marvin the Torch," "Slat's Grobnik" and other semi-mythic characters mingled in their columns with people from the empiric world. A generation of younger columnists began to imitate this blend and add refinements. By 1970, journalism's Reconstruction era was well under way.

The era of marketing-research specialists and their exponent, the consultant, took hold under a good deal less scrutiny.

Only in the last couple of political campaigns have the roles of such experts as David Garth and Gerald Rafshoon permeated the public consciousness. These consultants are known to advise their candidate-clients on how to apprehend public opinion and convert that knowledge into electoral victories through skillful use of the media.

What is not so generally appreciated — at least by the public — is that for the last twenty years consultants and other behaviorist specialists have been gaining great influence as advisers to the media themselves. Using the same techniques of market research and opinion-sampling that have advanced the science of moving consumer goods over the last half-century, these consultants have demonstrated how news media can strengthen their competitive position by improving their image: that is, by honing the effect of their "product" on information consumers.

These consultants secured a beachhead within local television news departments in the late 1960s and have expanded it steadily ever since. Many of these same firms are now advising newspapers, wire services, and magazines.

Consultants do not, of course, instruct their clients to lie. But their advice has almost nothing to say about the responsibility of journalism to reflect and interpret the great forces of economic power and social authority that affect the health of a community. Instead, the cumulative "truth" of news is irrelevant and it is judged purely as a product — one whose selling points are "chemistry," "warmth," "attention span," and "team atmosphere."

A summary of findings by a leading consultant, Frank A. Magid Associates, presented to Chicago radio station WMAQ in the mid-1970s, contained the following passage:

It is not surprising . . . that research indicates ratings rise when the broadcaster is successful in exposing the listener to what he *wants* to hear, in the very personal way he wants to hear it. In terms of news, this means ratings are improved not when listeners are told what they should know, but what they want to hear.

In short: not content, but the *effect* of content, is what counts.

Linking together these and other trends, and adding incalculable force to them, is the re-emergence of a sound-and-pictures communications environment.

One of the prophets of this new culture is Tony Schwartz. In addition to his role as a theoretician of sound, Schwartz is a veteran commercial-maker and consultant to political candidates, and, on the basis of this experience, he believes that although we "look at" television, it acts upon us in an auditory way.

In his 1974 book, *The Responsive Chord*, Schwartz declares that "truth, as a social value, is a product of print." Schwartz believes that auditory and visual information, as transmitted on television, evoke an emotional response from people that vastly subordinates considerations of content. "Effect," rather than literal veracity, is what holds with viewers. Whether Schwartz's observations themselves are ultimately true, they have been accepted as valid by much of the advertising industry — which increasingly has been using clever filmic and photographic techniques to suggest ideas that are not literally true. Thus a model exists for journalists who themselves have learned to value "effect."

But of course, in the beehive of mass communications that America has become, no one conduit can remain insulated from the influence of another. Just as print prototypes determined the agenda and the scope of broadcast news for years, broadcast forms are now reverberating into newspapers, magazines — even book publishing. The shortening of stories in deference to attention span, the revolution in eye-catching typography, the new ascendancy of the gossip and "people" sections, the inclusion of "life style" and "leisure" sections by formerly august papers such as *The*



*New York Times*, the supplanting of analytic journalism with opinion-poll, "horserace" coverage during political campaigns, the pervasive acceptance of a breezy, intimate, often self-referencing reportorial style — all of these trends may be linked to techniques that proved their competitive worth in television and radio.

And all of these techniques place "effects" over the demonstrable value of the ideas and information they contain. Why should we assume that truth itself, as transformed by electronic transmission into nothing more than stimuli intended to achieve a desired effect, should be immune? Why should we assume that sensitive young print journalists, themselves reared in the age of the mass-media beehive, do not to some degree internalize the subtly powerful ethic of commercial slogans that are not meant to be believed literally, of campaign promises clearly tailored to television's ambiguities, of "docudramas," of TV news shows that present their anchorpeople as stylized entertainers, of "Real People" who are manifestly untypical, of "hidden camera" commercials whose supposed concealment mocks rational logic?

If the case presented against them by their own newspapers is indeed accurate, Janet Cooke and Michael Daly merit no forgiveness: they violated a trust by manipulating the truth as it is still defined by prevailing norms.

But at the rate those norms are changing, a future generation may very well wonder what all the fuss was about.

## A multiple embarrassment

by PENN KIMBALL

The Pulitzer Prize "fiasco" — a description which appeared in the headlines of the *New York Daily News* and *Los Angeles Times* — stirred a flurry of hand-wringing among a large contingent of editorialists, although there were mixed feelings about where to fix the blame.

"The whole craft of newspapering caught a cream pie in the kisser," David Nyhan lamented in *The Boston Globe*. "The story was a phony, the reporter's credentials were phony, and it wouldn't have won the prize if the judges hadn't mucked about with the process."

That pretty well summed up the whole stack of clips on the subject. The Janet Cooke hoax in *The Washington Post* was a multiple embarrassment.

The temptation to revel in the misfortune of a successful but overweening competitor had to be submerged for fear of further damaging the fragile credibility of the press as a whole. There was compassion by some for the cub reporter caught out for fudging a job résumé and pushing a natural talent for words beyond the limits imposed by hard facts. She was young, black, and a woman besides, and there but for the grace of God might have gone quite a few others who learned better while paying their dues. What was to blame for her spectacular downfall? Unfair pressures on the

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disadvantaged? The permissiveness of the New Journalism? Gluttony for prizes? A breakdown in the editorial process? Whatever the cause, the consensus was that the greatest damage had been done to the indispensable ingredient of a tough profession: trust.

Judy Mann, a sister staffer on the *Post*, let it all hang out. "On Wednesday afternoon the newsroom staff gathered around the city desk and heard Ben Bradlee, the executive

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... while none of us likes anonymous sources or invented names or subjects who are simply identified as 'the youth,' we know that there are some stories the public would never know about without these devices. Watergate and the anonymous source named Deep Throat, of course, come to mind. But so does the story of the mentally retarded boy whose criminal activities would have landed him in a reformatory, but who could not be sent there because of his retardation and homosexuality. That story, written to illustrate Washington's lack of facilities for retarded people who also have criminal tendencies, could never have been written had it been necessary to name the juvenile.

Judy Mann,  
*The Washington Post*, April 17, 1981

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editor, confirm what they knew. Later, reporters confided to each other that they had fought back the tears during those few minutes that he spoke. . . . we are bound together by a common love of truth and the unspoken belief that truth will keep us free. . . . Ours is a business based on trust . . . and we trusted an extraordinary story by a colleague. . . . But for many of us, we are coming out of this with something of enduring value. We never knew just how very deeply we care."

Idealism usually makes hardened reporters feel uncomfortable; they prefer to hide their sentimental hearts behind a mask of gruff disdain for the foibles of this world. Columnist James J. Kilpatrick had little trouble, however, choking back his initial pity for Janet Cooke:

"Reading of her anguish, I reacted as many others must have reacted to the ruined career of a talented young woman. The poor kid, I said. In the next second, I reacted as a newspaperman. I could strangle that girl, I said. Whatever harm she may have done to herself, it isn't a patch on what she has done to all the rest of us. In our business, the news business, all we have to sell is our own credibility. This slick little liar has tainted our whole stock in trade."

The Des Moines *Register & Tribune* thought there was more to the story of Janet Cooke and Jimmy than the frailty of an inexperienced reporter consumed by ambition. Didn't the *Post* have some responsibility for the eight-year-old heroin addict its reporter had supposedly discovered?

"The press should be divorced from law enforcement," the *Register & Tribune* conceded. "It cannot so readily di-



voice itself from the human race. Ironically, if the *Post* had regarded Jimmy in that light and attempted to help him, it would have exposed the hoax and saved itself the worst of its embarrassment."

The syndrome was familiar. Having unearthed a sensational story, the *Post* felt compelled to protect a confidential source against the howls of public officials responsible for doing something about it. That exercise in stubborn independence, laudable enough in other circumstances, took on a life of its own, more important in this case than saving a human life. There was something gravely wrong with that equation.

The protection of sources is no academic question, of

**I've heard more sanctimonious talk about the newspaper business in the last two weeks than even I thought my colleagues were capable of. [Former *Washington Post* editor] Russ Wiggins . . . was down for the American Society of Newspaper Editors' convention, and halfway through he turned to me and said, 'Boy, my faith in our profession has been renewed.' And I said, 'Why?' 'Because I have seen 250 members of the pride of American journalism tell me that this could never happen on their papers.'**

Benjamin Bradlee,  
speaking at  
Columbia's Graduate School of Journalism,  
May 5, 1981

course, after a slew of cases in which courts have been called on to balance the claims of a free press against other needs of society. The deflation of *The Washington Post* on that issue had an ironic turn. The White Knight of Watergate had been hoist on his own petard.

"This was perhaps as irresponsible an example of journalism as you could find," said, of all people, Richard M. Nixon while touring, of all places, Monticello, the home of Thomas Jefferson. "I hope the *Post* does a better job in the future."

The sanctimonious note was sustained in the paper which had been beaten hollow on the Watergate story, *The New York Times*. "When a reputable newspaper lies, it poisons the community," the *Times* editorialized. "Every other newspaper story becomes suspect. Anyone stung by a newspaper story feels emboldened to call it a lie. Facts are not only impugned but made impotent. And the tense constitutional debate whether a newspaper must reveal its sources is irresponsibly polluted." Amen.

Perhaps a little soul-searching was in order for press institutions which at times had seemed a bit taken with themselves. The Greeks had a word for it — hubris — if you could believe the scholars in the editorial department. But the mea culpas — to employ another dead language — struck some as overkill.

"After reading several thousand lugubrious words about Janet Cooke," wrote Phil Kerby of the *Los Angeles Times*,

"I have concluded that the 26-year-old Washington Post reporter did not come close to bringing down Western Civilization. . . . It was dumb of the Post editors to publish a story by an inexperienced writer without making certain of its validity. . . . In the fashionable jabberwocky of the moment, the Post said the publication of the fabricated report reflected a 'complete systems failure.' Oh, come on. That description evokes an image of vast banks of computers at Houston Control and a system so finely integrated that if one computer is off by a millisecond the bird doesn't fly. I don't want to disillusion any reader, but that isn't quite the way it is. Good newspapermen have good standards and competent editors to enforce them. Mostly these procedures work well."

There was a danger, or so some of the press reaction suggested, that guilt by association would be invoked to undercut the long-standing struggle to make newspapers readable. The fabrication had contained beautiful quotes, gripping details, vivid narration. Janet Cooke was consigned to a netherworld of New Journalists who never let a fact get in the way of a good story. The techniques of fiction — scene, dialogue, action — were said to lead inevitably to the corruption of fact — composites, mind-reading, telescoped quotes. Where did imagination leave off and docudrama begin? Meg Greenfield posed the question on the op-ed page of the *Post* itself, and supplied her own answer: "It seems to me that over my own journalistic lifetime the whole unfortunate progression has been toward a looser and looser and ever more self-indulgent and impressionistic conception of what is real and what is imagined."

Sweeping generalizations, I was taught before Hunter Thompson and Tom Wolfe were born, should be examined with care.

**T**homas J. Bray of *The Wall Street Journal* thought he had spotted the worm in the apple in the slice-of-life style that was epitomized in Janet Cooke's rendition of Jimmy's world. "What this story really tried to do was to generalize from the particular. It's a favorite journalism art form; I've done it often enough myself. A reporter sets out to write about a social, political or economic problem but finds it tough to marshal enough material to make much of a point. On the other hand, he or she stumbles across some astounding piece of evidence that seems to confirm the presupposed theme. So a story is built around that one catchy piece of evidence which 'indicates' or 'suggests' — watch for those words — that there's something to the reporter's hypothesis. . . ."

Bray goes on to read the mind of the offending reporter: "Here we have this horrifying case of a child addict; who can be worried about whether or not it's really a general problem?"

The danger of generalizing from isolated facts is also illustrated by Bray's and many other comments on the *Post*'s fall from grace. Bray might just as well have written, "Here we have this horrifying case of a fake story; who can be worried about whether or not it's really a general problem?"

## Anonymity on trial

by BRUCE W. SANFORD

As this is written, at the end of May, knowledgeable Washingtonians are dismissing the Janet Cooke affair as an "aberration," worthy of all the attention accorded an oil spill. Cleaner tides, calmer seas lie ahead, it is thought. Most observers doubt that the *Post* can or will cure its chronic "front-pageitis," that feverish zeal that infects newcomers and veterans alike. But, they sigh, perhaps it will edit the products of ambitious reporters a little more judiciously.

For news media lawyers, the spill cannot be dismissed so easily. The sad, sticky truth is that no cleanup by the *Post*, no massive amounts of introspection or rulemaking, will remove the smudge from the public's consciousness. To a certain segment of the populace, Janet Cooke merely confirmed what they already knew: reporters are as dishonest as politicians are crooked. To another segment, less cynical but unfortunately no more likely to show up on a libel-case jury, she symbolizes an obvious truism: reporters are just as vulnerable as government officials to "blind ambition," to use John Dean's title.

Not since Myron Farber and *The New York Times* were pilloried in New Jersey three years ago has there been such a public relations debacle. In the Jasculevich murder trial, events unfolded in such a way as to give the public the distinct impression that Farber was less interested in protecting his sources than in protecting his book royalties. After Cooke, the public is equally likely to conclude that reporters won't disclose sources simply because they don't have any.

The impact of these misapprehensions in a libel case, or any other litigation where a reporter is attempting to protect a confidential source from disclosure, ought to be obvious. It certainly was to a group of the nation's press lawyers meeting in Chicago in mid-May for a seminar on Communications Law sponsored by the American Bar Association. Speaker after speaker echoed a familiar refrain: if your defense in a libel case depends on a confidential source and your reporter can't obtain a release from his pledge of confidentiality, be prepared to join the ranks of the Libel Case Losers. Juries aren't awarding the benefit of doubt to reporters these days, no matter how well-scrubbed or well-turned-out their counsel may persuade them to appear.

Without sounding apocalyptic, a lawyer owes it to a news media client to acknowledge candidly that the fallout from Cooke in the courts will be devastating. For years I've told editors that news media credibility comes home to roost in a courtroom. To the extent that credibility has been undermined, the atmosphere will be chillier in the halls of justice.

As a matter of law, therefore, it behooves writers to

routinely assess their reliance on confidential sources and refrain from using them except when essential. It will not be impossible for a skilled advocate to argue persuasively in the appropriate case that a reporter's use of such sources is integral to legitimate newsgathering — that it is a valuable, often indispensable, vehicle for furnishing the public with information. But it will be tough. For now, when that argument is made, a reporter must be able to justify his use of confidential sources with relentless logic. Otherwise, more and more judges and juries will cleave to Justice White's view for the 5-4 majority in *Branzburg v. Hayes* that there is no need "to protect a private system of informers operated by the press . . . that would be unaccountable to the public, would pose a threat to the citizen's justifiable expectations of privacy, and would equally protect well-intentioned informants and those who for pay or otherwise betray their trust to their employer or associates."

## Black thoughts

by C. GERALD FRASER

After reflecting on the *Washington Post*-Janet Cooke and the *New York Daily News*-Michael Daly incidents, this African-American reporter's reaction was that the papers and the reporters had it coming. It is a reaction based on more than twenty years in the industry, on my experience as a founder of an organization of black journalists, and on discussions with black professional colleagues across the nation.

Janet Cooke and Michael Daly are tips of the iceberg of American journalism's attitude — big, cold, and hard — on things racial. Without the thick funk of racial stereotyping in the nation's newsrooms, there would certainly have been no Janet Cooke affair, and Daly would have been shown up early in the game. Although he was tripped up by having invented a British soldier in Northern Ireland, Daly had written column after column about the people of Harlem that struck this reporter, and many other black readers, as transparently fictitious: a collection of exotic Amos 'n Andy characters.

Journalistic rules seem to be suspended when it comes to reporting on people who have no status. Gail Sheehy wrote her *New York* composite portraits about a prostitute and a pimp — Red Pants and Sugar Man. Junius Griffin wrote his *New York Times* series about the Blood Brothers — hundreds of black youths who, during the 1960s, were allegedly being trained in Harlem to kill white people, but whose existence was never established. And now Cooke with eight-year-old Jimmy the addict, and his mother and her boyfriend, a pair of dope-fiend Fagins celebrating the child's addiction.

Fantasies about black people can be passed off as journalism because in the nation's newsrooms very few facts are

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known about black people, and because black people don't much matter. Why else would a newspaper begin a purportedly serious magazine piece on the black middle class with an anecdote focusing on a black prostitute? ("The Black Middle Class: Making It," *The New York Times Magazine*, December 3, 1978.) Why else would a paper that brought down an administration not see through a junior reporter's fabricated story about a black drug addict? Why else would the nation's second-largest daily not realize that a junior columnist was making up his bizarre Harlemites? Editors don't know enough, or care enough, about poor people of any color to know what rings true and what doesn't. And their ignorance and insensitivity make it difficult for reporters to question their editorial judgments.

The presence of black reporters would help, said the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders in 1967. And it did in the late sixties and early seventies when the *Post*, for example, employed some of the nation's most talented black journalists — Robert Maynard, now editor of the *Oakland Tribune*; Joel Dreyfuss, editor, *Black Enterprise*; Austin Scott, staff writer, *Los Angeles Times*; Roger Wilkins, associate editor, *The Washington Star*; and Hollie West, who recently left the *Post* to free-lance. Now that the disorders have subsided, the black reporter is less useful. To get somewhere today, he must not only be considered "objective," but prove his objectivity by reporting the negative aspects of black life. One who did so was Janet Cooke's editor, Milton Coleman, who won his bars at the *Post* by extremely — and legitimately — hard-nosed reporting on the city's black mayoral administration.

It would seem that Cooke was trying to follow Coleman's example when she went after a story that would expose the life of a drug-addicted black family in its full horror. Going into the black community and coming out with this kind of tale, she believed, would help advance her career, just as Coleman's exposés had advanced his. But not all black reporters know "the black community," any more than all white reporters know "the white community." As one student at the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism asked Benjamin Bradlee when he spoke there recently: "What made you think Janet Cooke knew about the drug world?"

White editors, in the absence of real information about black people, do not trust black reporters. In a friendly conversation we had when he was national news editor at *The New York Times*, Gene Roberts, now executive editor of *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, told me that black reporters have to build up trust. I interpreted this to mean a special trust over and above what white reporters have to create. Black reporters could do this, he said, by writing copy that read pretty much like wire service material and the print competition.

Fortunately for the future of black men and women in America's white journalism, Daly's performance abroad pulled the covers off the newspaper industry. The industry seemed ready to make Cooke a symbol for all black reporters and crucify us upon her cross of deceit. But when Daly took his Harlem practices to Northern Ireland and the

British press unmasked him as a journalistic Max Factor, we did not hear that Irish-American reporters, or white male reporters, would henceforth be suspect. The discussion then focused almost exclusively on the insidious effects of the New Journalism.

Blacks of my generation grew up with the admonition that we should study hard and be bright enough to get and hold a job on merit. But merit alone has never been enough. And that is apparently why Janet Cooke felt it was necessary to decorate her background, to create a fictional self that would appeal to the *Post*'s editors. Being black, bright, and good-looking was not enough; she had to be a multilingual graduate of one of the Seven Sister colleges as well. In short, the ultimate super-negress. By creating this self, Cooke was playing up to white fantasies about blacks just as she did when she wrote "Jimmy's World."

These days a lot of journalists, black and white, want to be stars, because stars get high salaries and are famous. The stars are made by editors, and the stars, like their editors, are usually white. Both Cooke and Daly were trying to achieve journalistic stardom on my black back.

## Darts and laurels

*Laurel*: to the biweekly campus *Journal* (circulation 600) of Colorado Mountain College, for its prescient March 17 article charging that local miners were routinely ignoring certain safety practices under pressure from the Mid-Continent Resources Company to increase production. Written by a student in an introductory journalism class and published by the school paper after first being turned down by the *Glenwood Post* (the local daily), the *Journal* account was followed by an apology by the president of the college to the president of the coal company, an inquiry by school officials into the accuracy of the report — and an April 24 mine explosion that killed fifteen men.

*Laurel*: to the San Jose *Mercury News*, for its instructive exercise in epistemology, "Your Right to Know." After examining thousands of documents and interviewing hundreds of lawyers, judges, editors, police officers, and other public officials, reporters Scott Herhold and Steve Johnson produced a five-part series (beginning February 15) that unequivocally demonstrated the importance of the abstract principle of freedom of information by means of such everyday local realities as closed city council meetings, withheld crime reports, private school board decisions, inaccessible union files, sealed property records, and confidential fire-inspection reports.

*Dart*: to KLUP-FM, Chicago, and disc jockeys Rich Harris and Pat Still, for their grubby offer of a sack of potatoes to the listener who guessed the hour that Bobby Sands's hunger strike would end in death.

*Laurel*: to *U.S. News & World Report*, for its April 27 cover story, "Billions Down the Pentagon Drain" — an editorial bombshell blasting the monumental waste, fraud,

mismanagement, boondoggling, kickbacks, theft, and "gold-plated" weaponry in the only government department off limits to administration budget-cutters.

**Dart:** to Toronto radio station CFTR, for playing an irresponsible game of journalistic brinkmanship. Getting wind last October that a group of Ku Klux Klanners, neo-Nazis, and American and Canadian mercenaries was plotting to invade the tiny Caribbean nation of Dominica and overthrow the government, CFTR enterprisingly taped a series of interviews with the conspirators before the attack, acted as a conduit while plans were made, and arranged for its reporter to be on the island in April when the coup would take place. According to CFTR news director Robert Halliday, the reporter had intended to alert Dominican authorities when the invaders set sail, but, as things turned out, the plot was foiled on April 27 when U.S. agents arrested the crew, and CFTR's exclusive sank into the sea.

**Laurel:** to *The New York Times*, for "America in Captivity," a Sunday magazine special issue (May 19) on the hostage crisis in Iran. Three months in the making and drawing on interviews with hundreds of major figures, the 40,000-word inquiry comprised a collective analysis by the paper's top reporters of the pivotal points of decision in the 444-day trauma that held the country captive to the Iranian students, to the Ayatollah Khomeini, to public opinion polls, to media excitement, and above all, to its own yearning for national innocence.

**Dart:** to *The Dallas Times Herald*. In its April 14 story on Doug J. Swanson, the only Texas journalist to make it to this year's Pulitzer finals, the paper's morning edition managed to grab a little of the glory by identifying him as a T-H reporter temporarily "on leave"; under pressure from staffers, however, the afternoon edition was revised to carry a more accurate description of Swanson: "A former T-H employee now working as a free-lance writer in Chicago."

**Dart:** to the *San Antonio Light*. Following the arrest of eight members of the local police department on charges of drug dealing, the *Light* on April 19 printed, with the usual required approval of its managing editor, editorial page editor, and publisher, its staff cartoonist's rendition of three local cops in Easter bunny outfits, two offering goodies, one offering drugs. Two days later, under the headline DON POLITICO CARTOON MISLEADING, the paper explained that the cartoon in no way was "intended to disparage the fine service and conduct of the overwhelming majority of members of the San Antonio Police Department," and the day after that, repudiated the cartoon completely, apologizing for its poor taste and error in judgment in printing it. The editorial did not mention to what degree the possibility of a subscription boycott by the San Antonio Policemen's Association had helped the *Light* to see the light.

**Laurel:** to the Hudson/Bergen Counties, New Jersey, *Dispatch*. The paper's investigation into the presence of organized crime figures in publicly financed housing projects in Union City was instrumental in producing a thirty-six-count indictment of numerous city officials, including the mayor.

**Dart:** to The Associated Press, for the distorted perspective of its widely used wirephoto (below) of the May 3 Washington rally protesting U.S. involvement in El Salvador and the administration's planned cuts in domestic social programs. The picture's focus on the tiny, extremist, pro-Soviet Spartacist Youth League was hardly representative of the 20,000 marchers in a broad coalition that included the National Lawyers Guild, the Black Veterans for Social Justice, and the United Presbyterian Church.



**Dart:** to *The Bakersfield Californian*, for derailing its own editorial on the need for Amtrak. Following a strong April 8 editorial describing as shortsighted and economically false the Reagan plan "to all but wipe out" the nation's rail passenger service, the paper on April 9 ran an equally strong editorial supporting the cuts and calling the original Amtrak scheme "nothing more than a government bail-out." The crossed editorial tracks were explained in an accompanying note: "... Unfortunately, the opinion printed [in the first editorial] was not that of the Publishers of The Bakersfield Californian."

**Laurel:** to the *International Herald Tribune* and reporter Joseph Fitchett, for "The New Neutralists," a penetrating three-part series (May 4-6) on the anxieties, attitudes, and aims of the various groups in Britain, West Germany, Scandinavia, Belgium, and the Netherlands that comprise the mushrooming movement for a nuclear-free Europe.

**Dart:** to United Press International, for bending a journalistic knee to press lord (and subscriber) Rupert Murdoch. After moving a story on the sale of the London *Times* that identified the new owner as "the brash Australian magnate who built a newspaper empire on sensationalism," general desk staffers were sternly advised in an internal memorandum that the description had been "a judgment call on the part of the author that is not fully substantiated by the facts. . . . Hereonin," ran the February 27 Wirespike, "the general desk must, repeat must, check every, repeat every, story involving a subscriber with Stevenson or Reed before wire movement." H.L. Stevenson is UPI's editor-in-chief; Donald A. Reed is managing editor.



## **Facts on what the chemical industry is doing to maximize benefits, minimize risks**

### **Maximizing benefits**

The chemical industry and its products play a beneficial and increasingly vital role in every American's life. More than 40 percent of all goods and services used today rely in some way on chemicals.

Chemical industry sales totaled an estimated \$161 billion in 1980, making it the country's fourth largest industry. This helps the industry employ more than one million Americans. Additional millions are employed in industries dependent on chemicals.

During 1980, U.S. chemical exports were an estimated record \$21 billion and imports an estimated \$9 billion, giving the United States a trade surplus in this one field of nearly \$12 billion.

This makes the chemical industry the second largest contributor—behind agriculture—to the plus side of the U.S. balance of foreign trade.

On the farm, fertilizers and pesticides made with chemicals help growers boost U.S. crop yields by 43 percent.

Across the country, nearly 25 percent of the United States' food supply would spoil before reaching market without chemically based packaging materials and preservatives.

Around the table, vitamin and mineral supplements made with chemicals improve the nutritional value of many foods.

In the medicine chest, most of our

modern medicines, including sulfa, antihistamine, decongestants, analgesics and antihypertensives, are formulated from chemicals.

Throughout your home, nearly 65 percent of the fibers used to weave towels, draperies, upholstery fabrics, sheets, bedspreads, blankets and tablecloths are made from chemicals.

In industry and homes, approximately 80 percent of American-made rubber products come from petrochemicals.

In communications, chemicals help make the resins and plastics used in radio and television transmitters and receivers, telephones, computers and other electronic equipment.

### **Minimizing risks**

But along with benefits come risks. No chemical—not even common table salt—is 100 percent safe. Yet America must have chemicals.

So while we're maximizing the benefits, we're working hard to minimize the risks to protect

people and the environment. Here are some of the things our industry is doing:

**1.** The chemical industry has already spent \$7 billion on pollution control—more than any other industry in the U.S. In addition,

we estimate we'll spend \$10 billion just for safer waste disposal over the next five years.

**2.** We've hired more than 10,000 people whose sole job is to operate and monitor pollution control equipment that helps to protect



people and the environment.

**3.** We're creating useful raw materials from some potential pollutants. This helps to improve efficiency and conserve resources. Example: nitrogen wastes from one plant can nourish young pine trees nearby.

**4.** We're recycling many emissions and wastes back into the production process to improve efficiency and help conserve our nation's raw materials.

**5.** We've developed the secure landfill design—an underground structure with thick, compacted clay top, walls and bottom—to dispose of wastes safely.

**6.** New plant construction includes the most efficient equipment and processes. Older plants are being retrofitted with cleaner processes and technology.

**7.** We've voluntarily created a Hazardous Waste Response Center that offers teams of industry experts to Federal, state and local governments whenever advice or help is needed with waste-disposal problems.

**8.** We've developed programs which encourage chemical indus-

try employees to submit cleanup ideas. At one company, this helped eliminate 95,000 tons of air pollutants each year.

**9.** We've developed pollution control equipment like molecular sieves to trap and control gaseous wastes before they can escape into the atmosphere.

**10.** We're using aeration, biological treatment, flotation, separation and other methods in various combinations to create multi-function total systems for cleaning up our wastewater.

**11.** We have mobile environmental laboratories traveling the countryside to sniff out emissions and pinpoint their source.

**12.** We're using instruments like the gas chromatograph-mass spectrometer to detect materials at levels as low as one part per trillion. That is equal to one grain in an 18-foot layer of sand covering a football field.

**13.** We've intensified safety-training programs for chemical workers. Chemicals now rank as the second safest industry in the United States.

**14.** We've created CHEMTREC, a 24-hour emergency nationwide response system that provides information on how to handle chemical emergencies.

**15.** We've extended safety-training programs to include fire departments in plant communities and elsewhere. To date, we have helped train over 100,000 firemen throughout the nation in identifying chemicals and their possible hazards.

**16.** We've reinforced railroad tank cars with "head shields" and "shelf couplers" to help prevent ruptures and spills in case of chemical transportation accidents.

**17.** We've created the Chemical Industry Institute of Toxicology (CIIT). This \$14 million facility will spend \$27 million over the next three years to conduct more testing and research to assure greater product safety.

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For a set of four special reports or other information on these subject areas, contact CMA News Service, Dept. 1001, 2501 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037 or phone (202) 887-1222.

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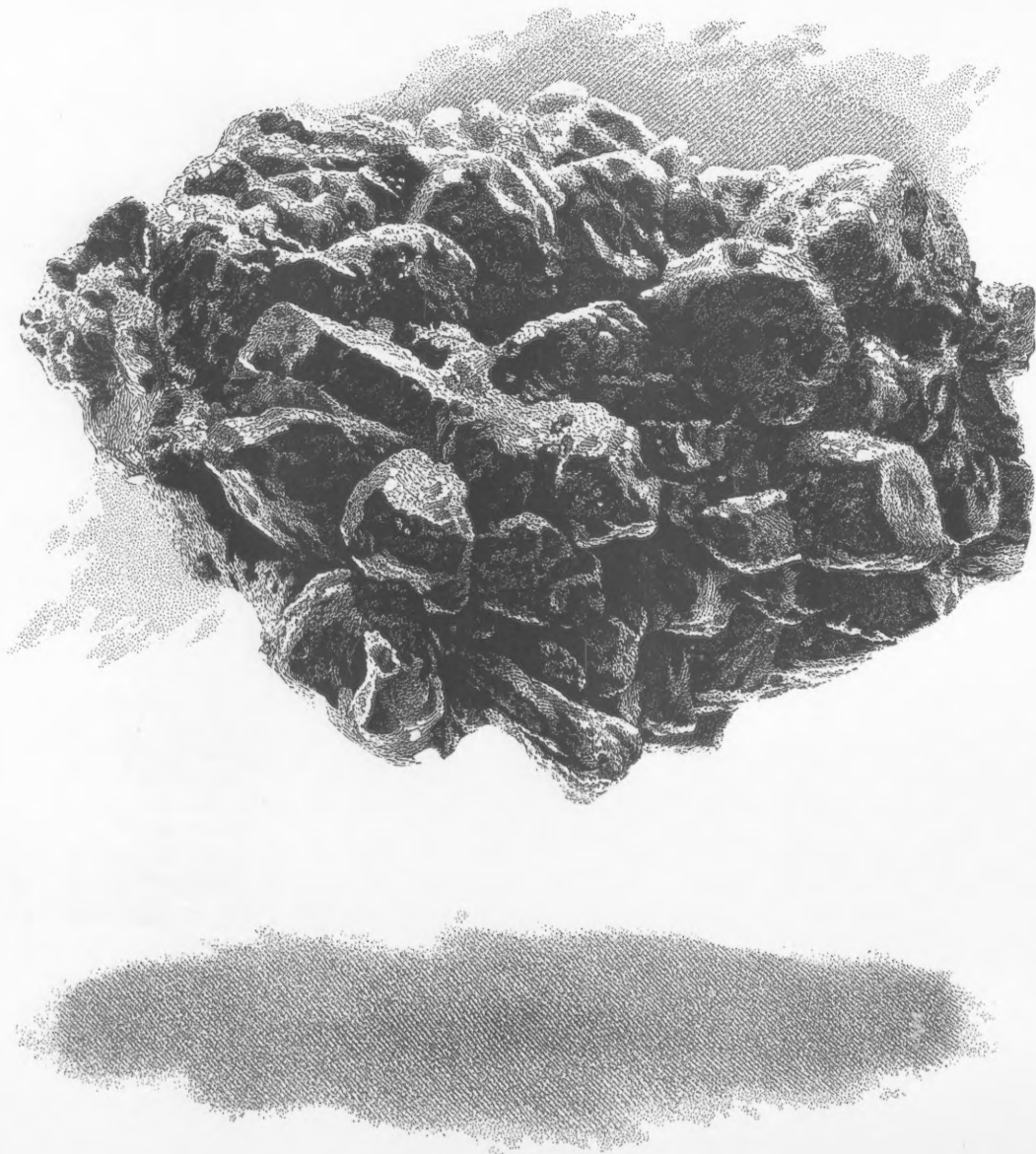
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# Citizen Scaife

Press-shy publisher Richard Mellon Scaife has used his immense wealth to shape today's political climate. A close look at the prime funder of the media-savvy New Right

by KAREN ROTHMYER

**F**ive years ago, George Mair was bored with his job as editorial director of KNX, the CBS radio affiliate in Los Angeles. As Mair recalls it now, he and John E. Cox, Jr., an aide to Republican congressman Barry Goldwater, Jr., hit on the idea of starting a nonprofit organization aimed primarily at improving relations between business and the media. The one thing they didn't have was money, so when they heard that Richard Larry, an administrative agent of the Scaife Family Charitable Trusts, was coming to town, they called up to see if they could talk to him.

"The only reason he agreed to have dinner with us is that he thought Jack was another man named Cox he was supposed to be meeting," Mair, now an editorial columnist for the Los Angeles Times Syndicate, says with a laugh. "But he was very polite and listened to our ideas. He came again a few months later and we had lunch. He gave us a check. When we opened it, it was far, far beyond our wildest dreams — one hundred thousand dollars."

Thus was born the Foundation for American Communications, one of a large number of organizations that owe their existence to the generosity of one of the richest men in America, Richard Mellon Scaife. Scaife, a great-grandson of the founder of the Mellon empire, has made the formation of public opinion both his business and his avocation.

Over the past twelve years, Scaife, whose personal fortune is conservatively estimated at \$150 million, has bought or started a variety of publications, mainly in the Pittsburgh area. But he has increasingly turned his attention from journalism to other, more ambitious efforts to shape public opinion, in the form of \$100 million or so in grants from Scaife

charities to conservative, particularly New Right, causes. These efforts have been dramatically successful. Indeed, Scaife could claim to have done more than any other individual in the past five or six years to influence the way in which Americans think about their country and the world.

Since 1973, Scaife charitable entities have given \$1 million or more to each of nearly a score of organizations that are closely linked to the New Right movement. These range from the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, a Massachusetts think-tank that examines political and military issues, to California's Pacific Legal Foundation, the oldest and largest of a dozen conservative legal groups, all Scaife beneficiaries, which function as mirror-images of the Nader-inspired public-interest law groups.

The press has generally overlooked Scaife, even when reporting on organizations that are financially dependent on him. For example, Scaife is the single largest donor to the Mountain States Legal Foundation — \$200,000 toward a \$1-million budget in 1980 — as acknowledged by Mountain States officials. Yet, earlier this year, when James Watt, then-president of Mountain States, was up for Senate confirmation as Interior Secretary in the Reagan cabinet, the press reported — on the basis of available information — that Mountain States was primarily funded by timber, utility, and mining interests.

Similarly, officials of The Heritage Foundation (see sidebar, page 44), a conservative think-tank that supplied eleven members of the Reagan transition team, acknowledge that Scaife is a far larger contributor than Joseph Coors, whose name has been the only one mentioned in most press reports on the group. Scaife, who joined with Coors to launch Heritage seven years ago, gave close to \$900,000 — three times Coors's gift — to help meet the current \$5.3-million Heritage budget.

"They're playing all sides of the street: media, politics —

*Karen Rothmyer, a former Wall Street Journal reporter, teaches at Columbia's School of Journalism. Research for this article was funded in part by the Center for Investigative Reporting.*

the soft approach and the hard," says George Mair, referring to Scaife and his advisers. Mair left the Foundation for American Communications just over a year ago, forced out, he claims, over the issue of what he regarded as the group's increasingly conservative bias. FACS president Jack Cox says, "The decision was made by the board of trustees to sever Mr. Mair's relationship with the foundation and that decision was not based on any political or ideological disputes."

**S**caife himself has never publicly discussed his motivations or goals. Indeed, he has repeatedly declined requests for interviews, as he did in the case of this article. (See sidebar, right.) Officials of most organizations that receive money from Scaife charities say they rarely if ever see Scaife himself, but deal instead with aides like Richard Larry, who has also been unavailable for comment. Most of the more sensitive Scaife donations are made through a family trust that is not legally required to make any public accounting of its donations, and most institutions that receive money from Scaife, like their more liberal counterparts, do not volunteer information about their contributors. The story of Scaife and his activities has to be pieced together from public records, such as published reports as exist, and conversations with people who for the most part decline identification — some because of business or professional reasons, others because they fear retaliation. (Shortly after this article was completed, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* published a four-part series on Scaife. Written by staff writer David Warner, the late-April series detailed Scaife's publishing and some of his New Right connections, relying in part on documentation also privately made available to this reporter.)

Scaife's secretiveness is but one aspect of a complicated personality. A handsome man in the blond, beefy style one associates with southwestern ranchers or oil millionaires, the forty-eight-year-old Scaife dresses like a Wall Street executive. His astonishingly blue eyes are his most striking feature. A friend from an early age of J. Edgar Hoover and a long-time admirer of Barry Goldwater, Scaife is said by those who know him to be fascinated by military and intelligence matters. At the same time, he is so shy and so insecure about his intellectual capacities, according to one business acquaintance, that "he never speaks business without two, three, four people around him."

David Abshire, who as chairman of the Georgetown University Center for Strategic and International Studies, a major Scaife beneficiary, has known Scaife for nearly twenty years, describes him as "likable, enthusiastic, and a very fine, public-spirited individual." A Democratic officeholder in Pittsburgh, on the other hand, views Scaife as a "lone wolf" whose clout "is through his money and nothing else." Pittsburgh acquaintances add that Scaife is rarely seen on the social circuit, and suggest that Scaife's relations with most of the other Mellons tend to be less than cordial. Certainly that holds true within his own family: Scaife has only one sibling, Cordelia Scaife May, and he has not spoken to her for the past seven years.

One small insight into Scaife's personality is provided by

Pat Minarcin, a former editor of the now-defunct *Pittsburgher* magazine, which Scaife financed. "We were talking one time after a meeting and I said to him, 'Is money power?'" Minarcin recalls. "He paused three or four seconds and looked at me really hard. He's just not used to people speaking to him on that level. He said, 'I didn't use to think so, but the older I get the more I do.'"

Certainly money is very much the stuff of which Mellon family history is made. Judge Thomas Mellon, the son of an Irish immigrant farmer who settled in the Pennsylvania countryside, rose to prominence in Pittsburgh during the latter half of the nineteenth century through shrewd real estate investments and a lending business that became the Mellon Bank. In time, the family holdings came to include, in addition to the bank, substantial blocks of stock in Gulf Oil and Alcoa, among other companies. By 1957, when *Fortune* magazine tried to rank the largest fortunes in America, four Mellons, including Scaife's mother, Sarah Mellon Scaife, were listed among the top eight.

In 1965, when his widowed mother died, Richard Scaife — in his early thirties, married, and the father of the first of two children — had no real career. After flunking out of Yale (he later finished at the University of Pittsburgh), Scaife had followed in the footsteps of his father, a retiring man from a local industrial family, and been given a variety of titles but little real power in several Mellon enterprises.

Just looking after his personal affairs could have become a full-time job. At the time of the last public accounting, in 1978, Scaife was the second-largest stockholder (after his second cousin Paul Mellon) in the Mellon Bank, one of the top twenty banks in the country. Until 1978, he was a bank trustee, having been elected to that post at the age of twenty-six. Among Scaife's other personal sources of wealth is the income from two trusts set up for him by his mother — probably amounting to around \$8 million a year. He has homes in Pebble Beach, California, and in Pittsburgh, and a large estate in Ligonier, Pennsylvania, and he flies from coast to coast in a private DC-9 — a plane so big that in commercial service it carries up to 100 passengers.

**A**fter his mother's death, Scaife began to take an increasingly active role in the family's philanthropic activities. Scaife family entities currently engaged in giving money to charity include the Sarah Scaife Foundation, set up by Scaife's mother; the Allegheny and Carthage Foundations, set up by Scaife; and the Trust for Sarah Mellon Scaife's Grandchildren (who number only Scaife's two, because Cordelia Scaife May has none). Taken together, these four groups have assets of more than \$250 million, and current annual income of at least \$12 million. (Eventually, Scaife's children will get the income from their trust, as Scaife now gets the income from his trusts.)

Gulf Oil company stock makes up a large part of the Scaife fortune. If one were to count in not just Richard Scaife's personal holdings in Gulf, but also those of the various Scaife charitable entities, the total would probably rank as the second largest holding (after Paul Mellon) in the





Richard Mellon Scaife

## Meeting Mr. Scaife

Richard Scaife rarely speaks to the press. After several unsuccessful efforts to obtain an interview, this reporter decided to make one last attempt in Boston, where Scaife was scheduled to attend the annual meeting of the First Boston Corporation.

Scaife, a company director, did not show up while the meeting was in progress. Reached eventually by telephone as he dined with the other directors at the exclusive Union Club, he hung up the moment he heard the caller's name. A few minutes later he appeared at the top of the Club steps. At the bottom of the stairs, the following exchange occurred:

"Mr. Scaife, could you explain why you give so much money to the New Right?"

"You fucking Communist cunt, get out of here."

Well. The rest of the five-minute interview was conducted at a rapid trot down Park Street, during which Scaife tried to hail a taxi. Scaife volunteered two statements of opinion regarding his questioner's personal appearance — he said she was ugly and that her teeth were "terrible" — and also the comment that she was engaged in "hatchet journalism." His questioner thanked Scaife for his time.

"Don't look behind you," Scaife offered by way of a goodbye.

Not quite sure what this remark meant, the reporter suggested that if someone were approaching it was probably her mother, whom she had arranged to meet nearby. "She's ugly, too," Scaife said, and strode off. K.R.

company. By the same rough yardstick, Scaife and Scaife family entities account for about 6 percent of the stock (all nonvoting) of First Boston Corporation, a major investment banking firm. Scaife was elected to the First Boston board last year. The Mellons and Scaifes as a whole hold about 13 percent of the First Boston stock, an investment second in size only to that of *Financière Credit Suisse*.

### The small-bore publisher

It was newspapers, however, not the world of finance, that eventually captured Richard Scaife's interest. In 1969, he made a successful offer of almost \$5 million for the Greensburg, Pennsylvania, *Tribune-Review* (daily circulation: 41,500), which was part of an estate being handled by the Mellon Bank. Greensburg, a town of 20,000 people about thirty miles east of Pittsburgh, is the county seat of Westmoreland County, which is a curious mix of, on the one hand, working-class, mob-infiltrated towns, and, on the other, rolling hills where Mellons ride to hounds.

Scaife apparently has not scrimped on costs at the paper, including salaries. He has lured at least two people from the Pittsburgh dailies, and his Harrisburg bureau chief, J. R. Freeman, says that it is his understanding that he can "go anywhere in the world and stay as long as I want." The paper, housed in an attractive, modern building on a Greensburg side street, routinely features staff reports on Pittsburgh politics as well as local affairs, depending on the wires for most national coverage.

Despite his vast resources, Scaife has not moved into the big leagues of publishing. During the Nixon years, he was urged by at least one high official in the White House to bid for *The Washington Star*, but he never did. Pittsburgh acquaintances say that several years ago Scaife talked about buying *The Philadelphia Inquirer*; however, Sam McKeel, president of Philadelphia Newspapers, Inc., the Knight-Ridder group that owns the *Inquirer*, says Scaife never made any overtures. Last year, Scaife entered into negotiations to buy *Harper's* magazine, but nothing came of those talks.

Instead, Scaife has settled for a modest collection of holdings which include, in addition to the *Tribune-Review*, the *Lebanon* (Pennsylvania) *Daily News* and *Sunday Pennsylvanian*; two Pennsylvania weeklies, *The* (Blairsville) *Dispatch* and the *Elizabethtown Chronicle*; until recently, a city magazine, *Pittsburgher*, which folded early this year; and a new monthly business Sunday supplement called *Pennsylvania Economy*, which began publishing last October. Elsewhere, he owns half of two weeklies in California and half of *The Sacramento Union*, his largest (circulation: 106,000) and only nationally known acquisition. Scaife bought the half interest in late 1977 from John McGoff, a Michigan publisher who is under investigation by federal authorities in connection with alleged secret payments by the South African government to permit him to buy news properties. (See "The McGoff Grab," *CJR*, November/December 1979.)

Various explanations are offered for Scaife's failure to acquire a major national publication. Some acquaintances



## The Heritage Foundation

A November 17, 1980, *New York Times* story on conservative think-tanks reported that "When the Heritage Foundation announced the other day that it was forwarding to Mr. Reagan a suggested 'blueprint for a conservative American government,' requests for details poured into the foundation's Capitol Hill office, and a dozen reporters from the nation's major papers and broadcasting networks showed up for the briefing." The article went on to quote Hugh Newton, a Heritage official, as saying, "We've never had this kind of attention before. . . . A lot of people who used to toss our stuff into the trash can are going to have to start reading it."

There is certainly plenty to read. Heritage, with a staff of sixty and a budget this year of \$5.3 million, is probably the most media-oriented of the New Right research and policy study groups, producing a steady stream of reports and publications aimed at both policymakers and the news media. Richard Scaife has given almost \$4 million to Heritage — including seed money — since it began operating seven years ago. This year, Scaife grants total about \$900,000, including money specifically allocated to an editorial briefing series, distribution of the *National Security Record*, and a Distinguished Journalism Fellow program.

The day-long, twice-yearly editorial briefings for journalists cost about \$15,000, of which Scaife gives two-thirds. About fifty to sixty journalists attend the sessions. Recent topics have included Enterprise Zones (a Reagan-backed urban revitalization plan), the Heritage "alternative budget" prepared for Reagan, relations with China and Taiwan, and the SALT II treaty.

The *National Security Record*, aimed primarily at Congress, is a monthly report on defense and national security issues. As an illustration of the *Record*'s influence, the foundation's September/October 1980 newsletter noted that "Liberal Carl Rowan devoted two columns in a single week to an attempt to refute the assertion in the July *National Security Record* that the Soviets were manipulating events in the Caribbean through the Cubans and other surrogates. Shortly thereafter, John Chamberlain, [Joseph] Kingsbury-Smith and [Smith] Hempstone wrote columns bolstering the *National Security Record*'s argument — all citing the Heritage research." Chamberlain, a King Features syndicated columnist, was chosen by Heritage last year as its Distinguished Journalism Fellow.

Other Heritage activities include serving as a consultant to WQLN, the public television station in Erie, Pennsylvania, which espouses free-market economics.

Heritage also publishes a quarterly, *Policy Review*, and produces a twice-monthly column, *Heritage Foundation Forum*, which it says is used by more than 450 newspapers.

According to John Von Kannon, assistant to the president of Heritage, Scaife and his aides rarely participate in Heritage functions. "They look for organizations they agree with," he says, and then leave them alone. K.R.

speak of his dislike of publicity; others of his unwillingness, despite his wealth, to spend the sums required. Pat Minarcin, the former *Pittsburgher* editor, suggests another aspect of Scaife's personality that may be relevant. "Here is a man who is as rich or richer than any other man in the country, who has a hunger to be accepted as a journalist and a responsible member of society," says Minarcin. "Yet he has this fatal flaw — he keeps shooting himself in the foot."

In the case of the *Tribune-Review*, the "shot" was Scaife's firing of a young reporter, Jude Dippold, in October 1973, two days after Dippold had remarked to the newsroom upon reading of Spiro Agnew's resignation as vice-president, "One down and one to go." Within hours of Dippold's firing, ten of the paper's twenty-four-person editorial staff resigned. They charged in a statement that Scaife (a \$1-million contributor to Nixon's re-election campaign and a \$47,500 contributor — according to Justice Department records — to the illegal Watergate campaign fund known as the Townhouse Operation) had "continually, in the opinion of the professional staff, interjected his political and personal bias into the handling of news stories." (See "Mutiny in Greensburg," *CJR*, January/February 1974.)

Six years later, another chapter was added to the "Citizen Scaife" saga. This time it involved the firing of a young editorial cartoonist, Paul Duginski, at *The Sacramento Union*. According to Duginski, on December 3, 1979, he was called in by editor Don Hoenshell, who has since died, and shown a letter from Scaife complaining about several unflattering cartoons Duginski had drawn of California's conservative lieutenant governor, Mike Curb. According to Duginski, the letter instructed Hoenshell to restrict Duginski to doing cartoons on local issues. Duginski accepted the restriction but told his story to *feed/back*, the San Francisco State journalism review. Shortly after *feed/back* published an article on the matter last spring, Duginski was told that he was being laid off for economic reasons.

As in the case of Jude Dippold, Duginski's colleagues rallied to his defense. In addition to presenting him with a T-shirt that announced "I've been Scaified," twenty-seven of them signed a petition offering to donate part of their salaries so that Duginski could continue to be employed. Management declined the offer. Duginski still has not found another full-time cartooning job.

Scaife's one foray into international publishing represents perhaps the most curious of his publishing enterprises. In 1973, he became the owner of Kern House Enterprises, a U.S.-registered company. Kern House ran Forum World Features, a London-based news agency that supplied feature material to a large number of papers around the world, including at one time about thirty in the U.S. Scaife abruptly closed down Forum in 1975, shortly before *Time Out*, a British weekly, published a purported 1968 CIA memorandum, addressed to then-director Richard Helms, which described Forum as a CIA-sponsored operation providing "a significant means to counter Communist propaganda." The Forum-CIA tie, which lasted into the seventies, has been confirmed by various British and American publications

over the years, and it was confirmed independently by a source in connection with this article.

Helms is a member of the same country club near Pittsburgh as Scaife. "Unfortunately," Helms says, "I really don't know him." On the matter of Forum and a possible CIA link, he adds, "I don't know anything about it. And, if it were true, I wouldn't confirm it."

Scaife's involvement with Forum began at a time when he seems to have begun to recognize that newspapering might not represent the most effective way to make his mark on the world. Perhaps it was frustration at his lack of clout as a publisher that led Scaife to cast around for other areas in which to play a public role. This search coincided with the birth of a powerful new movement, one that was to culminate in the election of Ronald Reagan — the New Right.

### Overlooked Maecenas to the New Right

Many leaders of the New Right are, like Scaife, men in their thirties and forties who, for one reason or another, see themselves as outside the old conservative establishment. They share not just a traditional free-market, anti-Communist view of the world, but also a sophisticated ability to analyze the forces that shape American society. This analysis has led to the creation of myriad New Right lobbying groups and think-tanks whose techniques are drawn directly from citizens groups and New Left organizations of the 1960s. ("Ten years ago the liberals kind of had a copyright on organizations outside of government," says Leon Reed, an aide on defense matters to Senator William Proxmire. "At some point the Right realized that all of the things like shareholder resolutions and testifying before Congress can be used by anyone.") This analysis also accounts for the tremendous emphasis the New Right puts on the news media, particularly television. No longer, as in Spiro Agnew's day, are the media seen simply as the enemy; rather, they are regarded as an institution which, like any other, is capable of being influenced as well as intimidated.

**S**caife, with his money, his interest in politics and the media, and his long-held conservative views, quickly became a key New Right backer. Indeed, the rise of the New Right coincided with a substantial increase in Scaife's power to assist it. In 1973, he became chairman of the Sarah Scaife Foundation; within a year, a total break occurred between him and his sister. Since their mother's death, Cordelia Scaife May had tried to restrain her brother from shifting family charitable donations away from Sarah Scaife's priorities — population control and art — and toward conservative causes. After the break, she apparently gave up.

Scaife beneficiaries take pains to draw a distinction between Scaife as an individual and the Scaife charitable entities, each of which is presided over by several trustees, of which Scaife is but one. The virtually complete shift from Sarah Scaife's priorities to Richard Scaife's is, however, clear evidence of his overriding influence. The New York-based Population Council, for example, has been given no further Scaife funds since 1973, after receiving nearly \$16



*Heritage Foundation board member Joseph Coors speaks at the May 1980 dedication of Heritage's Washington headquarters. Below, speakers at a November press conference are, left to right, seated; Robert Terrell, head of a Heritage task force; foundation president Ed Feulner; Tidal McCoy, now assistant secretary of the Air Force; and Dr. Norman Ture, now under secretary of the Treasury*



million during the previous thirteen years.

The Sarah Scaife Foundation, the Carthage Foundation, and the Allegheny Foundation, whose donations are a matter of public record, do give to many civic projects as well as to Richard Scaife's political charities. The Allegheny Foundation in particular has been a generous benefactor of such local causes as a major restoration now in progress in Pittsburgh. But the clearest indicator of which charities lie

closest to Richard Scaife's heart is the giving pattern of the Sarah Scaife Grandchildren's Trust. Trusts, unlike foundations, do not have to give any public accounting of how they spend their income. According to information privately made available, the grandchildren's trust has virtually ceased giving to organizations other than conservative and New Right groups.

Total donations from Scaife entities to conservative causes currently run about \$10 million a year. (This amount, of course, does not reflect any personal contributions Scaife may make, about which no information is publicly available.) Among better-known conservative funders, the John M. Olin Foundation gave a total to *all* causes of \$5.2 million in 1979, while the Adolph Coors Foundation gave away \$2.5 million. Among funders perceived as left of center, Stewart Mott, heir to a General Motors fortune, gives away, through a trust, an average of between \$700,000 and \$1.3 million a year, according to an aide, while the Haymarket Peoples Fund gave \$191,400 in 1979.

Sometimes, of course, a small amount of money at the right time is of more value than millions later on. Since 1973, Scaife entities have provided seed money to as many as two dozen New Right organizations.

The power of Scaife money is well appreciated by those who come up against it. An official of a large foundation concerned with arms control says that whenever he and other foundation executives interested in military issues discuss possible projects, they "always inevitably think about all that Scaife money and what it's doing." The official adds that the conservative groups "have a heck of a lot more influence [in defense matters] than the left-wing groups.

"A group like the National Strategy Information Center, which invites young academics to Colorado every year, can reach a lot of people very effectively," he says. "There is no analogous program on the left. The left-wing groups are constantly scraping for money. And they're badly splintered. The only thing that is anything like a match for the right-wing groups is the Institute for Policy Studies." The IPS budget for 1980 was \$1.6 million.

### Drawing up the agenda

Military and intelligence think-tanks and academic programs like the National Strategy Information Center have been particularly favored by Scaife; a catalogue of Scaife recipients over the past few years would contain virtually every significant conservative defense-oriented program in existence in the U.S.

Wide World



Scaife and his wife, Frances, at a White House dinner during the Ford administration. Scaife, an active Republican supporter, contributed \$1 million to the campaign to reelect Richard Nixon. Below, a summary of grants given by the Scaife family trusts shows that between 1977 and 1979 the Committee on the Present Danger received \$260,000 from Scaife entities for general operating support. Committee brochures assert that the committee's "activities are wholly financed by voluntary contributions from concerned citizens" and that it limits "annual contributions from a single source to \$10,000." For special projects, "particularly those appropriate for foundation support," the November 1976 statement adds, "we may accept larger amounts." The committee's tax return for 1979 shows that it received total contributions of \$516,745, indicating that Scaife supplied approximately 20 percent of the year's income.

SUMMARY OF GRANTS					
<u>Grantee and Date of Grant</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	R. M. S.	Trust for	Combined	<u>Grand Total</u>
		Family Trusts	Grandchildren		
		#560-030	S. M. S.	<u>Totals</u>	
		#560-047	#560-050		
Committee on the Present Danger (The)					
<u>Washington, D. C.</u>					
12/05/77	General operating support	3,000.00	7,000.00	10,000.00	
6/29/78	General operating support on research and educational activities	50,000.00	100,000.00	150,000.00	
6/20/79	General operating support	-0-	100,000.00	100,000.00	\$260,000.00

Groups devoted to free-market economics — like the Law and Economics Center at Emory University, which has provided all-expenses-paid economics courses for 137 federal judges — have been the second-largest beneficiary since 1973.

Because they have been able to attract big names — people like former Navy Secretary Paul Nitze, now chairman of policy studies of the Committee on the Present Danger, and economist Milton Friedman, a frequent lecturer at the judges' seminars — many Scaife-funded defense and economics organizations command media attention. This attention has increased with the movement of a number of people from New Right groups into the Reagan administration — among them Interior Secretary Watt, from the Mountain States Legal Foundation, and presidential counselor Edwin Meese, one of the founders of the Institute for Contemporary Studies. Both groups describe Scaife as their largest donor, and the institute says Scaife provided its seed money of \$75,000 in 1973.

**N**ot just names but numbers count. With so many conservative groups active in defense and economic matters, vast quantities of facts are constantly being generated and large numbers of seminars and briefings are constantly under way. "You can't underestimate the effect of a simple paper avalanche," says Leon Reed, the Proxmire aide. "One of the most important things groups like this can do is to give information to the people in Congress who support you. Groups can also provide people to speak at press conferences, testify before committees, things like that."

One example of the kind of "paper avalanche" to which Reed refers is the number of facts and figures generated by conservative groups at the time of the start of the 1979 congressional debate on the SALT II treaty. A quick check reveals at least eight studies of the issue, all critical, by groups that receive substantial Scaife backing. In addition, the Scaife-assisted Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies held a two-day briefing for twenty key European journalists on the issue, and The Heritage Foundation held an all-day session for members of the U.S. press. According to Herb Berkowitz, Heritage director of public relations, that press briefing "really kicked off the debate." The arms limitation treaty was not ratified.

Other examples of the potential impact of names and numbers abound.

□ In its September 17, 1979, issue, *Time* devoted two pages to a report on a Brussels conference on NATO sponsored by the Georgetown Center and chaired by Henry Kissinger, a counselor in residence at the center. The article gloomily asserted: "The North Atlantic Treaty Organization received a thorough physical and psychological checkup last week and was found to be less than robust at age 30. The general diagnosis: flabby nuclear muscle and a creeping inferiority complex."

□ In August 1980, a United Features Syndicate column by Virginia Payette reported that "Terrorism has become a fact of American life." The article went on to explain, "It doesn't have to be that way, according to Dr. Samuel T.

## Where the money goes

Some of the larger or better-known conservative and New Right groups to which Richard Scaife has given substantial funding since 1973 are listed below. Amounts, which include grants from the Carthage and Sarah Scaife Foundations and the Trust for the Grandchildren of Sarah Mellon Scaife, are approximate.

### Defense

The Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University (Washington, D.C.)	\$5.3 million
The Committee for a Free World (New York)*†	\$50,000
Committee on the Present Danger (Washington, D.C.)†	\$360,000
Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford University (Stanford, Calif.)	\$3.5 million
Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis (Cambridge)*†	\$1.9 million
National Security Program, New York University†; and National Strategy Information Center (New York)†	\$6 million

### Economics

Foundation for Research in Economics and Education (Westwood, Calif.)	\$1.4 million
International Center for Economic Policy Studies (New York)†	\$150,000
International Institute for Economic Research (Westwood, Calif.)*†	\$300,000
Law and Economics Center, originally at Miami University, now at Emory University (Atlanta)*†	\$3 million
World Research, Inc. (San Diego)	\$1 million

### Media

Accuracy in Media (Washington, D.C.)	\$150,000
Alternative Educational Foundation ( <i>The American Spectator</i> magazine, Bloomington, Ind.)	\$900,000
The Media Institute (Washington, D.C.)*†	\$475,000
WQLN-TV (Erie, Pa.)	\$500,000

### Think-tanks

The Heritage Foundation (Washington, D.C.)*†	\$3.8 million
The Institute for Contemporary Studies (San Francisco)*†	\$1.7 million

### Political Research/Education Groups

American Legislative Exchange Council (Washington, D.C.)†	\$560,000
The Free Congress Research and Education Foundation, Inc. (Washington, D.C.)†	\$700,000

### Legal Groups

Americans for Effective Law Enforcement (Evanston)	\$1 million
National Legal Center for the Public Interest, plus six affiliates (Capital Legal Foundation, Washington, D.C.; Mountain States Legal Foundation, Denver; Mid-Atlantic Legal Foundation, Philadelphia; Great Plains Legal Foundation, Kansas City, Mo.; Mid-America Legal Foundation, Chicago; Southeastern Legal Foundation, Atlanta)*†	\$1.8 million
Pacific Legal Foundation (Sacramento)†	\$1.9 million

† denotes that the group recently received a contribution equal to 10 percent or more of the current or most recent available budget, as based on public or private records and/or confirmation by organization

\* denotes that the group is known to have received seed money from Scaife



Francis, an expert on international terrorism of The Heritage Foundation. . . . Not if we give the FBI and the CIA a chance to stop it. . . . The way things are now, he warns, the FBI and the police are not only hamstrung by red tape, they are themselves being hauled into court for violating the civil liberties" of known terrorists.

□ On December 15, 1980, *The New York Times* carried a full-column report, datelined San Francisco, which began: "A group of conservative black businessmen and educators, meeting here over the weekend with representatives of President-elect Ronald Reagan, advocated a reduction in the minimum wage, the elimination of rent control laws and a thorough reorganization of many social programs." In the seventh paragraph, the article reported that the sponsor of the conference was the Institute for Contemporary Studies (to which Scaife is the largest donor).

□ Among a plethora of news articles last year on weakened U.S. military capabilities — which appeared at the same time as Scaife-backed organizations were turning out at least a dozen studies on the subject — probably the most breathless was an October 27 *Newsweek* cover story entitled "Is America Strong Enough?" The article, which quoted few people by name, depended heavily on such sources as "defense experts" and "a respected American military analyst." It reported in apocalyptic Pentagonese that "experts say Soviet advances in missile guidance now threaten the security of Minuteman ICBM's that constitute the land-based leg of America's nuclear triad — opening a 'window of vulnerability' that threatens to subject the United States

to nuclear blackmail, if not a Soviet first strike, by as early as 1982." The only expert named in a two-page spread entitled "Sizing up the Soviets' Might," was Jeffrey Record from the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis. In the old days, Record explained, "Our nuclear superiority gave the Russians pause because they knew we could blow them out of the water. Now our trump card has been canceled." Scaife provided the largest single portion of the institute's seed money (\$325,000) in 1976, and continues to be the institute's single largest donor, providing about one-third of its current \$1-million budget.

Such examples suggest how layer upon layer of seminars, studies, conferences, and interviews can do much to push along, if not create, the issues which then become the national agenda of debate.

### A bead on the media

While the defense and economics groups funded by Scaife court the news media and, by the very nature of what they do, attract coverage, Scaife has also shown himself to be interested in groups that specifically produce or scrutinize news or try to affect the newsgathering process itself. Contributions in this area do not approach those going to the other two areas; but they are substantial, and growing.

Some insight into the thinking of Scaife's advisers regarding the media is provided by George Mair, formerly of the Foundation for American Communications. "They always wanted me to tell them about how things work at CBS," Mair recalls. "They seemed fascinated by the media and





loved to hear all the gossip. But, at the same time, they had a conspiratorial view of how the media work."

To date, FACS has received more than \$700,000 from Scaife, including about 20 percent of its current \$650,000 budget. According to FACS president Jack Cox, Scaife remains the organization's single largest donor. Besides sponsoring conferences which have been attended by close to 500 journalists, FACS runs seminars for nonprofit organizations and businesses on how to deal with the media. Cox estimates that 3,000 to 4,000 executives have attended these sessions. FACS also sends a newsletter free to about 6,000 people, including the op-ed editors of all metropolitan dailies and all news directors of commercial radio and television stations.

Recent events sponsored by FACS include an April seminar for business executives cosponsored by the UCLA Graduate School of Management (itself the recipient of a \$1 million grant from the Sarah Scaife Foundation three years ago), and a December conference for journalists on nuclear energy cosponsored by the Gannett Newspaper Foundation.

Jack Scott, president of the foundation, describes FACS as "a balanced organization" with no perceptible bias. "Cox is a conservative; there's no blinking at that," Scott says. "But he is very reluctant to project his political opinions. I don't think that as an organization they have a philosophy."

Llewelyn King, publisher of *The Energy Daily*, based in Washington, D.C., was a panelist at the December nuclear

conference. He says that he believes that the reporters at that conference, whom he describes as having come, by and large, from small papers, "would have liked to have heard more from people opposed to nuclear power." At the same time, he says, "I don't think anybody got brainwashed."

Michael Rounds, a business reporter for the *Rocky Mountain News* who attended a FACS seminar on economics last year, says, "I felt it was very well done. Where else would I get a chance to meet Paul Samuelson?" He adds, "I saw it as business-supported — that's why I went. The economists weren't what I would call liberals. The organizers were trying to educate a bunch of journalists like me, trying to give them and me a sense of how business works and to deal with perceived anti-business bias."

Education of journalists is also a part of the work of another Scaife-backed media group, the Washington-based Media Institute. The institute's president, Leonard J. Theberge, also was a founder of the National Legal Center for the Public Interest, the umbrella group for six conservative legal groups funded by Scaife. Institute board members have included Herbert Schmetz, vice president, public affairs, of Mobil, and J. Robert Fluor, chairman of Fluor Corporation. Scaife's assistance began with a \$100,000 donation in 1975, the first year of the institute's existence, and is around \$150,000 this year, or about 15 percent of the budget.

Frank Skrobiszewski, second in command to Theberge, describes the main objective of the Media Institute as being "to improve the quality of economic reporting, particularly



A small sample of the "paper avalanche" produced by Scaife-funded entities is shown here. Above, Milton Friedman in the series *Free to Choose*, partly funded by a \$500,000 Scaife grant

on network television." To this end, the institute has published, for example, a study of television news that concludes that the networks have increased the public's fear of nuclear power. It also runs lunch seminars for journalists and puts out a newsletter.

The institute's newest project is the Economic Communications Center, which began operating last October. Its purpose, according to Skrobiszewski, is to provide journalists with quick analyses of current economic issues and easy access to experts in the field. "For example, when news comes out on something like the wage-price index, we can have an analysis prepared in one-and-a-half to two hours and have an economist ready to discuss it," Skrobiszewski explains. "Journalists often complain that they have no one to go to outside of government. This closes that gap." Skrobiszewski cites as an example of the center's quick acceptance the fact that its analysis of Iranian assets prompted interviews with the expert who prepared it by, among others, ABC, the AP, and UPI.

Scaife's funding not only makes possible a critical scrutiny of television programs; it also helps to create programs. Between 1976 and 1977, Scaife entities supplied \$225,000 (the second-largest grant after Mobil) to WGBH, the Boston public broadcasting station, for a series that examined topics including the CIA, defense, and foreign policy. Scaife later supplied \$110,000 in pre-production grants for a series on intelligence issues, based on a script by former CIA deputy director Ray Cline, now a top official at the Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies. According to Peter McGhee, WGBH program manager for national productions, the series currently is in limbo because only half of the needed \$2 million has been raised. He says he is unsure how much of that, if any, was pledged by Scaife.

Closer to Pittsburgh, Scaife supplied \$500,000 to public television station WQLN in Erie, Pennsylvania, to help underwrite *Free to Choose*, a ten-part series featuring Milton Friedman.

On the print side, Scaife has helped to underwrite a number of magazines. In the past decade, for example, Scaife has given more than \$1 million to the publishers of *The American Spectator*, a monthly whose views range across the conservative spectrum.

The most prestigious of the periodicals with which Scaife has been associated is *Daedalus*, the journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Three years ago, Richard Pipes, a Harvard historian who is now a member of the National Security Council staff, approached *Daedalus* with a proposal for a special issue on U.S. defense policy, with himself as guest editor. Pipes also provided a proposed backer, in the form of a Scaife charity that was willing to put up \$25,000 immediately and \$25,000 to \$50,000 later.

Pipes was keenly interested in defense policy, having been chairman of the so-called B-team, a group of ten outside experts convened by George Bush while Bush was CIA chief to make an assessment of Soviet military strength. The B-team conclusions, delivered in late 1976, included an estimate of Soviet defense spending that was twice as high as previous government estimates and an assertion that the

Russians were bent on nuclear superiority. The conclusions, which were widely accepted as official, played a major role in shaping the current defense debate.

The *Daedalus* project proposed by Pipes was agreed to, but funding was sought from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace to provide balance to the Scaife donation, and the issue of Pipes's editorship was left unresolved. As the essays began to come in, according to one source close to the project, it became evident that many were "under the influence of Pipes and the B-team mentality. It became clear that this was to be the B-Team's riposte to earlier liberal critics." Eventually, it was agreed that the project would have a board of advisers but no guest editor.

At some point following that decision, Scaife withdrew from the agreement to supply additional funds and insisted that the Scaife name not be associated with the project. Stephen R. Graubard, *Daedalus*'s editor, says his recollection is that Scaife aides were unhappy about several things, especially a time delay in the publication of what turned out to be two special issues, Fall and Winter 1980. "They never said Pipes had to be guest editor or we'll take our marbles and go home," Graubard says. Others recall things differently. A second source close to the project says, "The Scaife people said their understanding was that Pipes was to be the sole guest editor and strongly implied bad faith. They were, in effect, trying to dictate what was to be in the magazine. They wanted to give the cold-war hard line."

In the end, it is difficult to say what lessons, if any, can be drawn from the story of Richard Mellon Scaife and his activities. While such a recounting suggests that journalists should treat the rich and their creations — the foundations, the trusts, the charitable organizations — with as much curiosity and skepticism as they treat government and political groups, the fact is that the size of Scaife's fortune and the narrowness of his interests make him unusual, if not unique.

Beyond this, the fact that Scaife — virtually unnoticed — has been able to establish group after group whose collective effect has been to help shape the way Americans think about themselves and their nation's problems raises a concern addressed by Walter Lippmann nearly sixty years ago. "On all but a very few matters for short stretches in our lives, the utmost independence that we can exercise is to multiply the authorities to whom we give a friendly hearing," Lippmann wrote in *Public Opinion*. "As congenial amateurs our quest for truth consists in stirring up the experts, and forcing them to answer any heresy that has the accent of conviction. In such a debate we can often judge who has won the dialectical victory, but we are virtually defenseless against a false premise that none of the debaters has challenged, or a neglected aspect that none of them has brought into the argument."

By multiplying the authorities to whom the media are prepared to give a friendly hearing, Scaife has helped to create an illusion of diversity where none exists. The result could be an increasing number of one-sided debates in which the challengers are far outnumbered, if indeed they are heard from at all. ■

# Gannett in Salem: protecting the franchise

A tireless advocate of the public's right to know, the nation's largest chain thinks Operation Demolition is nobody's business but its own

by CASSANDRA TATE

**T**he Gannett Co., Inc. has made freedom its business. As a conspicuous defender of the First Amendment, it has filed dozens of lawsuits challenging courtroom secrecy. It has instituted more cases to open public records and meetings than any other media organization, with the possible exception of Knight-Ridder. Allen H. Neuharth, president and chairman of the board, has hoppedscotched around the country to speak on behalf of freedom of information. The public has been apprised of these activities through a million-dollar advertising campaign that identifies Gannett as "A World of Different Voices Where Freedom Speaks." Full-page ads in leading newspapers and magazines have followed such themes as: "At Gannett we believe that today, more than ever, journalists must be prepared to move quickly and effectively to defend the public's right to know — the cornerstone of our rights as a free people in a free society."

This dedication to the public's right to know, however, does not extend to the right to know about how Gannett does business.

Gannett has been charged with forcing the closure of a weekly competitor by violating state and federal antitrust laws in Salem, Oregon. Thousands of pages of depositions and documents have been filed in the case. Most of them have been closed to public inspection, at the request of lawyers for both sides. All parties to the suit have been ordered not to discuss it. The case is scheduled to come to trial in the federal courthouse in Portland, about forty miles from Salem, on July 7. The smart money is betting that it will be settled out of court before then, in which case much of the court record will remain permanently sealed.

Nevertheless, enough material has slipped into public view to provide a revealing look at some of the dealings between the nation's biggest newspaper chain and a pesky

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**'The secrets they're trying to hide are the dirty tricks of the trade'**

Richard McCord  
Editor, The Santa Fe Reporter

competitor. A selection of memos, letters, and sworn testimony had inadvertently accumulated in the public file despite a protective order issued when the case was initiated in 1978. The documents were discovered last spring by Richard McCord, co-publisher and editor of a small weekly (the *Reporter*) in competition with Gannett in Santa Fe, New Mexico. McCord spent two days in Portland hand-copying his way through a file thick with material outlining what Gannett called "Operation Demolition" — a campaign "to fatally cripple" the Salem weekly. He used his findings in a less than dispassionate report headlined THE NEWSPAPER THAT WAS MURDERED (see "Shoot-out in Santa Fe?" *CJR*, May/June, 1981).

Wayne Vann, director of marketing for Gannett in Salem when the suit was filed, now president and general manager of the Gannett paper in Santa Fe, says McCord's use of the file was "highly selective and biased." He does not dispute

the accuracy of the material quoted by McCord, saying only that other items would have supported Gannett's denial of the antitrust charges. McCord says his report reflected everything that was in the file when he saw it. An independent evaluation can't be provided, because Gannett lawyers reacted to the March 5, 1981, publication of the report by getting a court order that belatedly cleared the file of everything but routine matters.

"Two to three thousand other documents would have been favorable to Gannett," says Vann, author of a number of damaging memos copied by McCord, including one announcing "Operation Demolition." "I can't elaborate because I'm sworn not to divulge that information." He sounds genuinely wounded. "There was a lot more to it than was reported in the weekly. A lot of good was done by the paper in Salem. It hurts to be attacked when you've done a lot of good." Referring to the original protective order, Vann adds: "If the court had done its job, the information would not have been available to Mr. McCord in the first place."

Says McCord: "It's particularly ironic that the protective order was issued to protect 'trade secrets.' The secrets they're trying to hide are the dirty tricks of the trade."

**T**he *Oregon Statesman* and the *Salem Capital Journal* were typical of the newspapers that appeal to Gannett: small- to medium-sized operations in generally noncompetitive markets. Of the eighty-three dailies now owned by the company, only nine suffer head-to-head competition, and six of them — those in El Paso, Honolulu, Nashville, Shreveport, Tuscon, and Knoxville — conduct joint operations with their non-Gannett rivals in business, advertising, production, and circulation. The Salem papers were separately owned, but they had joined noneditorial operations in 1954. They had a combined circulation of about 65,000. Their market — Oregon's capital city and its suburbs, an area of about 100,000 population — has no television stations of its own and is served by only a few radio stations. In 1974, the papers became the fifty-third and fifty-fourth members of the Gannett newspaper group. (Gannett takes pains to avoid the word "chain," with its implication of shackles, preferring the innocuous, neighborly "group.")

There was little initial change after the sale. Gannett continued to publish the morning *Statesman* and the evening *Journal* as separate editorial units with all other functions combined. But meanwhile, advertisers were becoming increasingly unhappy with the *Statesman-Journal* Publishing Co. According to a number of sources, the company refused to follow the customary practice of giving rebates to advertisers who bought more space than they had agreed to by contract. Such rebates are usually based on the difference between the rate the advertiser was given on the contract and the rate he would have received if he had contracted for the higher volume. It is also customary for an advertiser who falls below his contract to be rebilled at a higher rate. Gannett's customers in Salem were being rebilled or "short-rated," but not rebated. Furthermore, the publishing company charged an unusual \$500 "makeready" fee above the

normal costs of preprinted advertising circulars. "Dispatch runners," instead of trained account representatives, were Gannett's only personal contact with many advertisers, including some of the largest ones. The publishing company was widely regarded as arrogant and unresponsive.

The final straw, according to the testimony in the depositions, came in 1975, one year after Gannett bought the papers, when advertising rates were raised in stages by an average of 42 percent. A contingent of major Salem advertisers subsequently approached Community Publications Inc., the Portland-based publisher of a group of community weeklies. The advertisers pledged full support if the company would launch a Salem paper.

Community Publications was a smart and growing outfit with an approach to the newspaper business that can be summarized by this comment, made by its marketing consultant in a report still tucked into the public file: "Many American consumers now use the newspapers as shopping guides more than as news sources."

Founded as a printing business in Portland in 1948, the company was acquired in 1969 by Early California Industries, a food and chemical conglomerate headquartered in Los Angeles. In addition to the printing business, it operated one weekly in Portland and six in Hawaii at the time it became involved in Salem. It later established a weekly in Spokane and bought a small daily in Oklahoma City.

Community Publications entered the Salem market with the free-distribution *Community Press* on March 3, 1976. Volume 1, Number 1 was fat with local announcements and feature stories, along with such fixtures as recipes, a horoscope, a crossword puzzle, comics, and TV listings. Page one was emblazoned with a large, full-color photograph. Color was sprinkled throughout page after page of paid advertising. Fifty-five of the inaugural issue's eighty-eight pages were devoted exclusively to advertising, and ads were abundant on all the other inside pages. Every major chain with a store in Salem, along with local merchants by the dozen, was advertising in the new weekly.

Among the news stories printed in the first issue was an item noting that the Gannett Co., Inc., had just reported a net earnings gain of 15 percent in 1975, a 20 percent dividend increase for shareholders, and the thirty-third consecutive quarter of record earnings since the company started selling public shares in 1967.

**T**he *Community Press* made a profit from the beginning, enough so that it later expanded to twice-a-week publication. By June 1976 it had captured almost 20 percent of the Salem advertising market. At that point Gannett appointed a new publisher in Salem: N.S. "Buddy" Hayden. Hayden brought in Wayne Vann as marketing director.

After assessing the situation, Hayden concluded — in an August 3, 1976, letter to John E. Heselden, a senior vice president at Gannett's corporate headquarters in Rochester, New York — that "... we must get the business back at any cost. That's not a very businesslike decision, but seems necessary and prudent under the circumstances."

McCord found that letter and copies of other enlightening



correspondence in the federal court file in Portland. Among them was the following letter from Hayden to Gannett president and chairman Neuharth, dated October 11, 1976:

Dear Al: (Private)

Having used my first three reports from Salem to describe the gravity of the situation, I think it is about time I turned my attentions and reports to revealing the positive aspects of what we are doing. . . .

The situation with The Community Press, in my view, can be summed up as follows: I think that in the first three months after my arrival, we worked exclusively on "containment." I think that we have won that battle, in spite of the fact that they started the weekend edition. In my view, it has been a dismal flop.

. . . Now that I feel containment has been accomplished, our goal is to fatally cripple The Community Press, and to accomplish this we have instituted "operation demolition," which is a program of bonuses for the ad sales staff for moving advertising accounts completely out of The Community Press on a 13-week basis. . . .

I am very optimistic, and we are literally pulling out every stop, from normal selling to endless (and tiring) entertaining.

There are, to be sure, tough days ahead, with reduced revenues and higher expenses. Each detail is planned with your admonition to me in mind: protect the franchise. My timetable remains a normal operation, free of outside influence and unnecessary extra expense, by January 1, 1978.

That's the way it is in Salem, Oregon, September 1976.

Buddy

Marketing director Vann set forth the details of "Operation Demolition" in a long memo (sixty-nine typewritten lines, single-spaced) distributed to his staff in October. As Hayden explained to Neuharth, the campaign was built around the use of bonuses for business kept out of the Press. Sales people would be paid bonuses for each week one of their accounts did not advertise in the competitor. Vann coined the term "Dobermans" to describe sales representatives working to "demolish" the competition. McCord found several copies of the memo in the file. He published the following excerpts:

**OPERATION DEMOLITION**  
13-week Display Sales Program  
With a BANG!!

It is important in any aggressive sales organization to have a positive sales program to actively attack other media, namely The Community Press. . . .

You will be given a list of accounts which have published ads in The Community Press during the past four weeks. This is your BASE LIST.

When an advertiser is *demolished* from The Community Press, you receive a code C for credit of \$10.00 per account each week the account *stays* demolished. (But the \$10 credit is lost for each week the ad goes back into the CP — that is, it is taken away.)

The whole idea of the program is to reduce or eliminate each of the advertisers on your base list, while at the same time you keep additional advertisers from advertising in The Community Press. The more successful you are in this effort, the more money you will accumulate during the program, and earn extra Christmas cash.

Example: If you have 10 advertisers on your base list, and you eliminate five and keep them out of The Community Press for 13 weeks, you could earn \$650. . . .



**'Now that I feel containment has been accomplished, our goal is to fatally cripple The Community Press . . .'**

N.S. "Buddy" Hayden  
Former Gannett-group publisher

Your Base List accounts do not have any value until you demolish (remove) the account from The Community Press the first time. Until that occurs, the account will carry the code I, for inactive. . . .

As an added incentive, the campaign included bonuses based on group performance. Every salesperson would receive a final bonus tied to the total number of accounts kept out of the Press. Near the end of the memo, its main point was reiterated:

**REMEMBER —** We are talking about the *numbers* of accounts, **NOT LINAGE** — So the large advertisers running a lot of space are still only one advertiser. It is quite possible for you to reduce the total numbers of advertisers by 75% OR MORE.

Gannett's corporate officials were delighted by the program, as demonstrated by this memo sent to Vann from Rochester on November 22:

To: Wayne Vann (Private/Confidential)  
From: Paul B. Flynn, Director of Marketing Services

Congratulations on the November 14 efforts. The impact of your "demolition derby" is very evident, and deeply appreciated here. You are a superb ad director!

Several major advertisers had pulled out of the Gannett papers entirely when the Press began publication. One by

one, Gannett enticed them back. Deposition testimony and other documents recorded by McCord indicate that advertisers were offered substantial rebates to abandon the *Press*; that some were lured back with trips to Reno and Lake Tahoe; that Gannett generated rumors that the weekly was about to fold; that Gannett threatened to stop doing business with suppliers — a typewriter repair company, for example — which advertised in the weekly; and, finally, that some advertisers were told their accounts would not be accepted in the Gannett papers in the future unless they stopped using the *Press* immediately.

**M**cCord found evidence — in the following memos — that Gannett had created questionable “associations” to give advertisers special rates, provided they pulled out of the *Press*. Both memos were sent from publisher Hayden to marketing director Vann.

April 7, 1977

I had lunch today with Bruce Philippi to discuss with him the promotion which begins next week by Philippi Ford and John Lucas Chevrolet in Stayton.

First Bruce agreed to register the name “Stayton New Car Dealers Association,” which I suggested would provide a vehicle for using a combined rate based on the fact that the two were an association. . . .

November 16, 1977

. . . I would also like you to check with MAB Enterprises about the Community Press buy for the Reed Opera House promotion. My understanding was that the association rate that we gave them was a quid pro quo expecting loyalty. . . .

Please be careful of the confidentiality of this information.

By February 1978 the *Press* was losing about \$20,000 a month and capturing less than 10 percent of the advertising market. A Sunday edition, initiated sixteen months earlier, during more euphoric days, had been discontinued. Publisher Hayden was sufficiently pleased with the situation to write this letter to Rollie Melton, a top Gannett executive in Rochester and a personal friend:

February 3, 1978

Dear Rollie:

Twenty months ago I began an intensive three-month fact-finding mission upon my arrival in Salem. I reported most of my fact-finding in Rochester in early September 1976. Al Neuharth’s admonition was simple: “protect the franchise.”

Following that visit, Gannett all but gave me carte blanche for the capital items we deemed necessary. At no time since my arrival in Salem has any corporate officer exerted any bottom-line pressure on me while we dangled in the lower part of the bottom fourth in profitability. All of us, apparently, had the same visions and the same patience and the same understanding of investment.

. . . This announcement [of the folding of the Sunday *Community Press*], coupled with the steadily eroding lineage of The Community Press during the past six months, is a source of inspiration and pride to all of us here. We are doing a job the way it ought to be done. We are getting results. We have protected the franchise.

. . . Rather than rest and smirk, we will move forward with an eye towards eliminating The Community Press from the market all together. That may not be a practical objective, but at the current levels of operation, The Community Press is no more than any

other shopper in any other market, and we can live and prosper and coexist without material adverse impact.

All of us are naturally pleased. My praise and my warm professional respect goes to my associates and colleagues. My thanks go to the Gannett Company and its executives for giving me the latitude to do what needed to be done, and having the confidence to let me do some very, very unusual things in what was a very, very unusual situation.

It’s been one hell of an experience. . . .

Buddy

Carbon Copy: Al Neuharth

Despite his comment about peaceful coexistence, Hayden was not ready to relax the campaign, as evidenced by the following memo:

March 15, 1978

To: Wayne Vann (PRIVATE)

From: N. S. Hayden

A glance at The Community Press this week, as for the past several weeks, indicates that we may indeed be dropping the ball.

The most disheartening aspect of the current issue is the Self Service Furniture ad. What’s the story there? Whose account?

Our lineage looks strong, but are we running the risk of becoming too complacent? There are many, many small accounts in The Community Press. . . .

I think if we allow Community Press sales people to get smaller accounts and build their ad count, we’re looking for continued trouble.

Dobermans don’t sleep.

The word quickly filtered down to the sales staff, in a memo sent out by retail advertising manager Jody Carson, who worked under Wayne Vann:

March 22, 1978

The Community Press knows how important “meat and potatoes” accounts are to them. Especially in light of the fact that they are losing more and more major accounts.

Once we start eliminating the small “meat and potatoes” accounts out of the CP, they will have a very difficult time surviving.

Let’s make a real effort to keep the small accounts out of the CP.

One of the last major advertisers to return to the Gannett fold was K Mart, which had been a leader in the effort to establish an advertising alternative to Gannett in Salem.

McCord copied at length from a sworn deposition by Michael W. Moors, then K Mart’s regional advertising director in Portland, now an advertising executive in the firm’s Los Angeles office. McCord’s published report included the following exchanges:

Q: Did anyone employed by the Statesman-Journal company ever offer you or to your knowledge anyone else at K Mart any sort of preferential treatment as an inducement for abandoning the Community Press in Salem?

A: Yes.

Q: What kind of inducements were offered?

A: There were rates that were considerably less than had been in the market with the Statesman-Journal for several years. We were aware of parties that were given, inviting our people to attend. We were also aware of all-expense-paid trips to Reno and Lake Tahoe offered to our management. . . .

Q: Did the Statesman-Journal company ever offer a two-year contract with a guarantee of no rate increase in exchange for a

commitment by K Mart to stop using the Community Press?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you recall who made that offer?

A: It was made by their publisher, Mr. Buddy Hayden, and their advertising manager, Mr. Wayne Vann.

Gannett was prepared to offer additional enticements, according to the following testimony — a discussion of a letter sent to Moors by Wayne Vann on February 4, 1977:

Q: Let me direct your attention to the first paragraph on the second page, which says, and I quote: "It is my understanding that K Mart missed out on two rebates because the newspaper did not have a rebate system at the time. In 1973 you would have earned a rebate of \$9,000 and in 1975 a rebate of \$3,797.28, or a total of \$12,797.28. Although it can be said that our newspapers do not owe K Mart these rebates, I feel that our two companies should get together and discuss a plan that would be mutually beneficial. I am led to believe your contract with Community Press expires on March 1, 1977, so February would be an opportune time for our two companies to get together."

... Was Mr. Vann proposing that the Statesman-Journal would pay K Mart the nearly \$13,000 in missed rebates if K Mart would agree to stop using the Community Press?

A: That's the way — that was our impression of this particular situation, yes. . . .

Q: Did you consider that offer unusual at the time you received this letter?

A: Yes. . . .

Q: What was there other than this letter, if anything, that left you with the impression that that was the nature of his proposal?

A: Well, the telephone conversations that we had. . . . No one ever goes back and says, you know, "Here's money for something that, you know, we just kind of forgot about two or three years ago." That is just not done in this business.

**W**hen K Mart continued to hold out, Moors testified, Gannett representatives took their case to his superiors at the firm's corporate headquarters in Detroit, trying "to make us look absurd from all standpoints, from our decision-making to taking graft and being involved in graft and corruption." He said Gannett implied that local K Mart officials were being bribed to continue with the *Press*. He said his personal judgment, in supporting a free-distribution weekly shopper over a paid circulation daily, was questioned. Finally, he said, Gannett advised K Mart "... that all the major advertisers were back with the Statesman-Journal; that because of this fact The Community Press could not stay in business much longer from the loss of revenue; and that if we didn't return our advertising to the Statesman-Journal, there would be nothing for us to advertise in should The Community Press go out of business."

The *Press* began considering antitrust actions against Gannett in the summer of 1978, a move that at least one Gannett executive took as high praise for a job well done:

July 13, 1978

Dear Buddy:

That's unique praise indeed to be recognized publicly for "un-usual and severe competitive reactions." My lexicon says that's a Wall Street euphemism for "they're beating our ass off."

Congratulations again.

Make a liar of their prediction of "short-term adverse effect on . . . profitability" and send them back to the pickle works.

Robert B. Whittington  
Gannett West

The *Press* lost \$39,127 in August 1978. It ceased publication on September 27, announcing in its final issue that two days earlier it had filed suit accusing Gannett of unreasonable restraint of trade, conspiracy to monopolize, and illegal trade practices. The suit seeks damages to be determined by the court.

A few months earlier, Gannett had acquired seven television stations, thirteen radio stations, *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, the *Oakland Tribune*, and the nation's second-largest outdoor advertising company, in a merger with the Combined Communications Corp. The merger boosted Gannett's revenues over the billion-dollar mark for the first time. Gannett is now the largest newspaper chain in the country, in terms of both number of papers and total circulation. Its other enterprises include the Louis Harris public opinion research organization, twenty-three nondaily newspapers, and magazine and film production units. Last April, Gannett reported that its earnings had increased for the fifty-fourth consecutive quarter. The company's interest in and ability to produce profits is legendary. In one frequently repeated anecdote, Allen Neuhauser, the chief executive officer since 1973, was asked whether the name



'Send them back  
to the pickle works'

Robert B. Whittington  
Gannett West Executive

was pronounced Gan-NETT or GAN-nett. "Money," he replied in one version; "The accent is on the 'net,'" he said in another.

Community Publications has fared considerably less well than its former competitor. Its Spokane operation has been liquidated and its Oklahoma City daily sold. Last February, when Gannett was announcing its quarterly profits, Community Publications division president Richard F. Dickey bought what was left of the business from its corporate owners and changed the name of the company to RFD Publications Inc. Its operations today consist of one weekly in Portland and eight in Hawaii, all distributed free by mail, and commercial printing firms in Portland and Hawaii.

Dickey declines to discuss his experiences with Gannett, but he has this to say about the newspaper business in general: "The newspaper industry has been set apart from other business enterprises in terms of antitrust laws, to the point that, under the Newspaper Preservation Act, newspapers are immune to the laws in certain circumstances. Chains have become the dominant force in the business. I think it's time to see to what extent the same types of rules and regulations that apply to other segments of industry should be applied to newspapers."

Buddy Hayden left Salem to become publisher of the Gannett newspaper in Camden, New Jersey, the *Courier-Post*. He is now publisher of the non-Gannett Philadelphia *Bulletin*. He, too, declines to discuss the events in Salem because of the protective order.

Wayne Vann is in Santa Fe, where he is making Richard McCord nervous. McCord says the competition between his weekly and the Gannett paper "is more intense lately, but fair as far as I know." Vann says: "I operate my newspaper, and if that has an effect on my competition — and it's got to, because there are just so many advertising dollars — well, that's the free enterprise system."

**A**dvertisers in Salem, also cautious about discussing the situation because of the antitrust case, don't speak of Gannett with unalloyed warmth these days, but they seem to have fewer complaints than they once had. "They've changed a lot of their practices, but who knows what it will be like in five years?" says the marketing director for a major retail chain in the Northwest. Referring to the fact that Gannett combined the two Salem papers into the single *Statesman-Journal* last year, he adds: "It's a one-paper town now, and I don't think that's healthy."

Among those who have watched the developments in Salem with a good deal of interest is A. L. "Butch" Alford Jr., publisher of the Lewiston, Idaho, *Morning Tribune*. He took a particular interest after Community Publications moved into Spokane, about 100 miles north of Lewiston. The *Tribune*, owned by the Alford family for three generations, is much courted by the chains. Alford has no higher regard for most of them than he has for shoppers.

"The *Community Press*'s move into Salem caught Gannett with its pants down," he says. "It wasn't meeting the needs of the community and particularly the advertisers. Rarely have the chains had such competition. Buddy

Hayden is one tough s.o.b. He likes a good newspaper, but what he really likes is a good fight. He went to Salem and kicked out a bunch of deadwood and tightened things up and wined and dined advertisers so much it got to where he was running a shuttle to Nevada. And he got 'em back, all the majors and most of the other advertisers too.

"So where is that boundary between an honest cockfight and dirty pool? I don't know. But I suspect *The Community Press* went out and got the business in much the same way as Gannett got it back. Still, I feel sorry for *CP*. They really got Gannett's stamp on their bottom."

**A**l Neuharth picks up freedom awards on behalf of Gannett with almost as much regularity as he reports record-breaking profits. There was a first-place award from the Scripps-Howard Foundation for Defense of the First Amendment in 1979, a 1980 honor medal from the Freedom Foundation, a Freedom of Information citation from the Associated Press Managing Editors Association last November. A report presented to a meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism in 1979 pointed out that "Gannett's active pursuit of these [First Amendment] cases may be an important argument on Gannett's side if the issue of limiting media concentration ever gets serious consideration in Congress, the Federal Trade Commission, or the courts." The report, by John Soloski and Carolyn Stewart Dyer, of the University of Iowa's School of Journalism, also noted that Gannett's association with freedom of the press may give it an edge in the chains' scramble to acquire the last few independent newspapers in the country. Gannett, with eighty-three dailies, has set the ownership of 100 as its goal. Given the public's essentially dark suspicions about chains, an independent publisher might assuage his conscience by selling to a chain with a record of good citizenship.

Still, many observers credit Neuharth personally, and Gannett in general, with a sincere belief in the virtues of an unfettered press — within limits. "Neuharth has complicated motives," says one acquaintance. "He seems to really want to protect the First Amendment, but mostly he wants to make money. He's not going to let principles interfere with profit."

"There's no room for secrecy in a courtroom, during the trial or pretrial proceedings," says Neuharth, flatly, at the outset of a brief telephone interview. "Courts are supposed to be public." Neuharth has consistently argued that the right to gather information is inherent in the right to report it. Does he think there are any circumstances under which court records ought to be closed? "Only in cases involving minors or family court matters." Does he see any inconsistency in that position and Gannett's insistence that most of the file in Salem be closed and people connected with the case ordered not to discuss it? He bristles with annoyance at what he clearly considers a dim-witted question. "No, I don't think it's inconsistent at all. That's a civil case involving a controversy between one business and another. The records of a corporation hardly seem to me to fall under the First Amendment. That's *business*! I don't think it has anything at all to do with the First Amendment."



# TRUTH TEST

***"The best test of truth is the power  
of the thought to get itself accepted  
in the competition of the market...."***

*—Oliver Wendell Holmes*

But that means the thought has to make it into the market in the first place. And whether it gets that far often depends on the press.

Economics and business and taxation and energy were major issues in the last national election campaigns. The American people had to make political decisions based on their grasp of those issues—and the strength of that grasp depended in large measure on what they had been able to learn about those complex topics.

Take energy reporting, for example.

Some of it is superb. But, as an oil company, we are occasionally astonished—and dismayed—to see or read a quick, shallow treatment in the news concerning energy matters of profound domestic or international significance.

This country can't make good decisions about business and energy unless the facts and the informed ideas on such matters have been explored by thorough and knowledgeable reporting.

One might say that the first test for truth is a responsible press—thoughtful and thought-provoking.

**Mobil**

# The nonstop news network

It's live from Atlanta!  
CNN is first with  
a 24-hour newscast.  
But how novel  
is its news?

by JAMES TRAUB

**T**ed Turner does not like network television one little bit. Ask him about network programming and that make-yourself-at-home smile practically vanishes behind the leading-man mustache. The hand holding the fat cigar takes a poke at the air, and the human embodiment of the New South says, "I think that the three networks are in a heap of trouble. And you know who with? The leaders of America! The people in Washington now don't like them. Our military leaders don't like them, our religious leaders, our educational leaders, our business leaders."

Ted Turner thinks the networks — and above all their news programs — are so bad that one year ago he started up his own network. Cable News Network carries news twenty-four hours a day to more than six million households. Now, says Turner, America has an alternative. "We're a lot more responsible than [the networks] are. We go a lot deeper." In fact, he claims, with a disarmingly straight face, "We do a better job with a third of the money right now." Still talking as he heads for his next appointment, the irrepressible Turner — who also owns the Atlanta Braves and the Atlanta Hawks; "superstation" WTBS, which broadcasts entertainment nationally; and the 1977 America's Cup — bellows, "We're heroes. Real heroes."

Having just celebrated its first birthday, Ted Turner's brainchild has defied initial predictions of disaster. Its survival bodes well for Ted Turner's bet that

the nation's recently increased appetite for news, together with the growing popularity of cable TV, will make his original \$20-million investment in the all-news system pay off. Initial monthly losses of \$2.5 million have since declined to under \$1 million. Though the network cannot turn a profit until many more homes are wired for cable (thus making the station more attractive to big advertisers), it already reaches one-third of the nation's 19.3 million cable homes; both the ratio and the total figure promise to increase rapidly in the near future. (To pick up the signal, cable operators must pay fifteen to twenty cents for each subscriber; viewers pay nothing.)

This growing popularity — Congress has been wired for cable in order to receive CNN's programs — indicates that the new network has been accepted as a bona fide news organization. What is less clear is whether CNN will truly take advantage of its heady freedom from time restraints to present news with greater depth and more imagination than network TV, as it has promised, or if it will content itself with merely offering an all-day version of Eyewitness news. Despite the novel potential of round-the-clock news, and the iconoclasm of owner Ted Turner, few daring or remarkable ideas have emerged thus far. The network's executives, most of them culled from ABC, CBS, and NBC, seem to have looked to the familiar examples of all-news radio and prime-time evening news as guides in devising their own format.

**T**urn on CNN and you're likely to hear a tidy summation of the news in repeating sixty-minute units, much as you would on all-news radio. This format rules the airwaves each weekday, except for two hours in the afternoon, an hour in the early evening, and three-and-a-half hours later in the night. These six-and-a-half hours include reports on sports and finance, a Hollywood gossip show, and a sophisticated two-hour interview program, *Take Two*.

As a respite from this rigid schedule, CNN periodically inserts short segments offering instruction, happy talk, or plain old malarkey. Editorialists like Barry Goldwater, Ralph Nader, Bella Abzug, and Phyllis Schlafly (any ideology goes at CNN) are regularly allotted a few minutes to ride their respective hobby-horses. Dr. Joyce Brothers tells us how to mend a broken heart, and the Galloping Gourmet explains how to make dietetic iced coffee that tastes like a dream. And, reflecting owner Turner's taste for happy news, "People & Places" periodically offers such edifying spectacles as a photo of a giant panda pushing a stuffed baby panda in a perambulator.

"Our pace must be as fast as any of the networks," says executive producer Sam Zelman, and the network has indeed succeeded in attaining the dizzying speed of a Harlem Globetrotters' pregame drill. A typical sixty-minute segment broadcast between 11:00 A.M. and noon on a weekday in late April raced through five stories in four cities, including reports on Reagan's health and Boston fire station closings, before the first commercial break. In the next ten minutes, before another commercial, CNN presented stories on the Atlanta child-murders, a crime-control conference in Massachusetts, hearings on drug abuse, the Harrison Williams Abscam trial, murders in Buffalo, and a survey showing that young Catholics are rejecting religious doctrines. The next ten minutes featured physical therapist Arden Zinn "focusing on the inner thigh," sports, and Herb Tanzer on Siamese cats. Growing serious again, Atlanta anchors Lois Hart and Dave Walker offered more headlines from Boston, Ireland, Israel, England, and France. The final twenty minutes included three more sets of headlines, weather, Dr. Joyce Brothers, a report from Oakland about a former presidential yacht, a breakneck "two-minute newscast," and two more commercials.

What makes CNN unique — its "signature," as assignment editor Ed Turner (no relation to the boss) puts it — is the

*James Traub is a free-lance writer in New York.*

fact that whenever something newsworthy is going on in the world, the network is on the air, ready to relay it. CNN claims that its broadcast of Cuba's 1981 May Day celebration was the first live telecast from that country to the U.S. People at CNN speak with pride of the station's willingness to go all-out on a breaking story. For more than four days after the release of the hostages, the network preempted its regular programming to provide minute-by-minute coverage of their return. Reporters were stationed in Wiesbaden, in West Point, and with families all over the country. Network president Reese Schonfeld

calls those hectic days "our first test in going head-to-head with the networks," and he considers them a watershed in CNN history.

**E**arly in its history, CNN demonstrated its aptitude for vivid live television. When the Air Force announced the explosion at a Titan missile silo in Damascus, Arkansas, last September 19, CNN immediately dispatched reporter James Allen Miklazewski and a cameraman. As soon as the camera was set up, the Air Force deployed a truck to block its view. So CNN moved its camera higher. The Air

Force rolled in a bigger truck. The station then stuck its reporter and cameraman in the bucket of a cherry picker, from which they transmitted a highly suspicious scene of men in aluminum suits scurrying about. The Air Force, which had announced that the nuclear warhead had been safely stowed away, now moved in a convoy of trucks and covered the whole area with a tarpaulin. But CNN won the match when Washington bureau chief Stuart Loory induced a Pentagon official to admit that the warhead was still on the site, then relayed the information to reporter Miklazewski, who broke the story of the Air

**'I think the networks are in a heap of trouble,' says Ted Turner. 'We're a lot more responsible than [the networks] are. We do a better job with a third of the money right now. We're heroes. Real heroes'**



*Ted Turner started Cable News Network as an alternative to the commercial networks, but viewers tuning in to CNN might not immediately be aware of what the difference is. As executive producer Sam Zelman says, "Our pace must be as fast as any of the networks."*

CNN



President Reagan, minutes before being shot



Sandi Freeman: "Who are your heroes?"  
Zbigniew Brzezinski: "I suppose  
Napoleon, Alexander the Great. . . ."



Russian troops, coal strike, brushfires,  
Jenrette divorce, Prince Charles, and more



"It's clear that [Haig] intends to run things.  
And those who question his leadership  
role can look forward to a bruising fight."

Force's evasion, live, from atop his cherry picker.

Live broadcasting, of course, is suited to nothing so well as fires, murders, and accidental explosions at Minuteman silos — the kind of disasters Turner has piously denounced the networks for covering with such morbid zeal. CNN reports on such events with typical network abandon. A spokeswoman proudly ticks off CNN's claims regarding its coverage of the Reagan assassination attempt: it was first to announce the attempt itself, at 2:33 p.m., and first to broadcast the "Jody Foster connection," and it devoted the most TV hours to covering the story.

At the same time, the network has followed the lead of public television — despite CNN executives' impatience with what they call its drabness — in devoting long hours to such unspectacular but significant events as official hearings. It televised, almost gavel to gavel, the congressional hearings on Alexander Haig's nomination for secretary of state, and, with equal thoroughness, Frank Sinatra's testimony before the Nevada Gaming Control Board.

On occasion, CNN has used its vast tracts of time innovatively. CNN president Schonfeld recalls as his favorite piece a five-part series on brain cancer among chemical workers in the Texas Gulf region. Within two weeks after the inauguration of Ronald Reagan, the network broadcast the full two-and-a-half-hour segment taped by the networks — but cut to only a few minutes for the air — depicting President Carter and his staff in the Oval Office agonizing over the final details of the hostage settlement. And, throughout the week of the space-shuttle launch, the network devoted its entire daily two-hour interview show to a discussion of the American space program.

The essence of CNN news, however, remains the two-minute morsel. Unlike, for example, National Public Radio's daily *All Things Considered*, which devotes up to twelve minutes to each subject, CNN has chosen to keep its stories as brief as the typical network segment — and hence, inevitably, as superficial. A representative report from the Pentagon features a reporter beside the map in the Pentagon press room offering an

official account of a particular event, supplemented by a rumor or whisper to the contrary and, possibly, an assurance that CNN will be monitoring the situation as it does or does not develop. The rapid succession of such reports offers about as much insight into the news as the four-volume set of "120 Musical Masterpieces," constantly advertised on the network, affords into classical music.

And, since the network assumes it has a mostly fresh set of viewers every hour,

---

**'Much of what  
appears on the screen seems  
to represent  
a fascination with the  
medium itself —  
going live at the drop of  
a hat, for instance'**

---

stories are generally repeated throughout the day, whether or not there is anything to add to them. Cynthia Dwyer's name cropped up every fifteen minutes last February 10 while Iran debated whether or not to put her on a plane. Longer stories, too, suffer from the preference for repetition over elaboration. Tony Schwartz of *The New York Times* found that Cable News had managed to devote far more time than the commercial networks to the hostages' return without providing any essentially new information.

Not everyone at CNN is happy with the machine-gun pace of the news. Senior correspondent Daniel Schorr says that he has made Atlanta headquarters aware of his objection to the quantity of "secondhand" news that CNN airs. "I would rather do deeper things than more things," he says, though he adds that he is pleased that "the piano is being played twenty-four hours a day." Schorr's is very much a minority view at CNN, especially since the departure of George Watson, who left his job as Washington bureau chief after repeated wrangles with Atlanta over what higher-ups considered his failure to keep up with CNN's frenetic pace. ("He was



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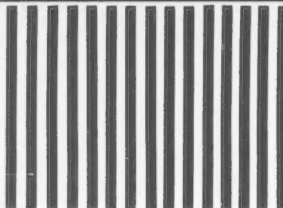
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too conservative, too much of a network type," says one party to the dispute.) While careful to praise CNN for its professionalism, Watson says, ruefully, "Here is an operation that has all the time in the world at its disposal. But where the psychology is [that] every ten minutes the weather guy has to pop up, and then the sports guy has to pop up . . . it's kind of a junk-food diet that may have the illusion of nourishment."

There are several apparent reasons for CNN's stubborn adherence to a conventional news format. One is money. "It's very expensive to make TV interesting," finance correspondent Stuart Varney observes, and CNN has neither the manpower nor the cash necessary to offer much greater depth or variety. Although Ted Turner has been lavishing every available nickel on his offspring, CNN now spends roughly one-fifth the \$150 million budgeted per year by each of its commercial rivals. And it is now \$30 million in debt. The network is hoping that the rapid addition of subscribers — Turner says he expects 10 million by the end of the year — will entice more lucrative advertising accounts than such current regulars as Body Belt, Hohner harmonicas, and the top recordings of Kate Smith.

An equally important, if more temporary, limitation is simply the very newness of it all. The CNN crew is still studying the terrain in the brave new world of around-the-clock television news, and much of what we see on the screen seems to represent a fascination with the new medium itself — going live at the drop of a hat, for instance, and fiddling with the length of news segments.

**T**he final, and fundamental, factor is the model the network has chosen to follow. Most of the folks at CNN have come to it from the bosom of commercial TV and, even if they do feel far friskier (and more overworked) at CNN, they generally have nothing but respect for traditional news programming. When asked to cite the highpoint of CNN coverage, reporters almost invariably recall a live event — a fire or murder. Only the exceptional few register a strong preference for investigative work. And conversations with half a dozen reporters turned up not one who

felt constrained by CNN's two-minute format. As New York reporter Joann Lee says, "There aren't many stories you can't do in two minutes."

If there is one person at CNN who does not so readily accept the wisdom handed down from the giants on Manhattan's Sixth Avenue, it is, oddly enough, its president. A bulky man with thick glasses, a fixed squint, and a voluble, domineering manner, Reese Schonfeld is CNN's benevolent dictator. He offers bright ideas to his underlings at 3 A.M. He shouts over the telephone. He shouts at the five TV screens in his office. At a recent editorial meeting he sat on one side of his imposing desk and rebuked practically everyone on the other side at least once.

"I refer to the networks as 'stripminers of the mind,'" says Schonfeld, who came to CNN from the Independent Television News Association. "They pander to the worst instincts." Schonfeld insists that, if it is to succeed, CNN must distinguish itself from its tradition-bound competitors in the way it presents the news. Schonfeld, in fact, is fond of his programming's rather slapdash look and would rather have CNN suffer from occasional sloppiness than aspire to the tedious polish of the networks. Like Schorr and a few other older staff members, Schonfeld has more of a print than an electronic mentality, and he says he intends to hire sixty to eighty more people, including some reporters from print, who will be expected to bring more thoughtfulness to the news.

Thus far, CNN's success consists largely of having created, in remarkably short order, a professional news operation in a domain with no existing ground rules. And it seems on the way to becoming commercially viable to boot. But its success to date stems from its acceptance of the conventional notions of "professionalism" — slick packaging, a brisk pace, and effective use of the technological paraphernalia now available to videocasters. Anything that dents the networks' monopoly of national news must be considered good; but anything that does so essentially by adopting the networks' own standards ultimately gives little cause for rejoicing. Ted Turner and his boys are not yet heroes — only pros. ■



1980 World Series: "Marty Bystrom is a very capable pitcher. . . . I have no qualms about using Marty Bystrom."



Fashion report: "We're moving away from the exotic elongated [eye] shape toward an almond shape."



Mondays in Hollywood: The Borgnines at a premiere



A familiar face at CNN

# Hellzapoppin' in Martin County

It's the courthouse gang vs. an upstart publisher — and the air is blue with libel suits

by JOHN ED PEARCE

**O**ne curious thing about Inez, Kentucky, aside from the fact that it has no sewers, police force, or local tax structure, is that no one knows how many people live there. A green sign at the city limits announces "Inez 600," but Mayor Joe Hammond says the correct number is closer to 850, a figure he arrived at by counting houses within a half-mile of the courthouse and multiplying by 3.5. The 1980 Census should have counted the good folk of Inez, but at the time it was believed that the town was unincorporated, despite the fact that it is the seat of Martin County, a hilly, coal-heavy county lying along the Kentucky-West Virginia line.

In all, Inez would seem an unlikely site for a First Amendment battle, yet that is what seems to be shaping up between the Martin County "courthouse bunch" and Homer Marcum, editor of the weekly *Martin Countian*. A barrage of lawsuits has been fired at Marcum, charging him with everything from libel to "illegal transactions with minors." The lawsuits, say the county officials responsible, are intended simply to protect them against Marcum's reckless, politically-motivated, and libelous journalism. Marcum says that they are designed to break him financially — to force him to go out of business or quit the kind of reporting that has brought him into courthouse disfavor.

To understand the fight it is necessary to understand the ferocity with which

politics is played in Martin County. Although the county now boasts the third highest per capita income in the state — thanks to soaring coal production — it has long been an area of chronic unemployment where political jobs have been regarded as lifesaving plums. A sample ballot for the May 26 primary race listed more than 100 contestants for county offices alone. "Everybody and his brother's running," said Russell Williamson, Inez Deposit Bank chairman. "So many running, nobody left to vote; anybody with two votes can win." Primaries are especially bitter because the county is overwhelmingly Republican, and the primary winners are almost automatically elected.

It is also important to understand, in sizing up Marcum's opponents, that in Martin County the lust to public service seems to affect families like some strange genetic virus. For example, most of the lawsuits against Homer Marcum have been filed by John Kirk, a private attorney who was formerly county attorney and who is a cousin of Willie Kirk, county judge executive, in whose name many of the suits have been brought. Willie Kirk is the husband of Victoria Kirk, who was county judge while Willie was temporarily out of office not long ago. Victoria is the sister of Pauline Smith, director of the Martin County Housing Agency. Pauline Smith is the mother of Larry Smith, county planner and chairman of the board of his mother's Housing Agency, of which Willie, Pauline's brother-in-law, is a board member. Commonwealth Attorney Paul Deaton is a Kirk ally.

The Muncy family also fields a good delegation. Thomas Muncy is sheriff, Betty Preece Muncy is property valuation administrator (tax assessor), and Drewie Muncy is county attorney. But workers in Mrs. Muncy's office are quick to point out that "Betty is no kin to the sheriff; she was a Preece." The Preeces also offer themselves frequently

for public service. C. H. "Took" Preece ran for sheriff in the recent primary. (He lost.)

Thirty-three-year-old Homer Marcum is almost as deeply rooted in Martin County soil as the Kirks and the Muncys. He is married to an eastern Kentucky girl and is, like his father, a staunch Republican. He and his lone reporter, Joe Szakos, are active members of the Kiwanis Club, play softball on the local team, and exchange banter with the other morning coffee-drinkers in the Towne Cafe. After college (an A.B. and graduate work in English) and time in the Army, Marcum came back to teach at the Pigeon Roost Elementary School in nearby Pilgrim. During his spare time he began writing for John Kirk's (there goes that name again) newspaper, *The Martin Mercury*.

"I got tired of the kind of news they were printing and figured I could do better," he says. "So in August 1975, I started *The Martin Countian*. I had my whole family out selling subscriptions and trying to collect enough so that I could pay for my first edition."

It was obvious that the town wasn't big enough for both *The Martin Mercury* and *The Martin Countian*. Within two months, Marcum received his first salvo from the Kirks when John Kirk charged that Marcum had libeled him in a news story concerning Kirk's alleged application for a radio license. Kirk dropped the suit. "It was dismissed at my request," Kirk now says, "upon Mr. Marcum's personal assurances to me that he would check his sources and be more careful of what he put in his paper. I made a bad bargain. No sooner had I dropped my suit than he libeled me again." This was a reference to Marcum's allegations that Kirk continued to control the *Mercury*, which he had sold and which folded shortly thereafter.

**I**n November 1975, Marcum received his first official attention from the then-sheriff when he was stopped at a roadblock and arrested for drunken driving; a Kentucky State Police trooper found Marcum sober, and the charge was dismissed. In January 1976, Marcum's car and that of his wife were sprayed with green paint during the night. A few weeks later the building in which the newspaper is housed caught

John Ed Pearce is a magazine writer for the Sunday Louisville Courier-Journal.





The Martin Countian

*Editor Homer Marcum (left) and reporter Joe Szakos. Says Marcum, "These people are trying to drive us out of business by litigation"*

fire, but the blaze was extinguished before it reached the newspaper offices.

These actions were prelude. During May 1976, Marcum was arrested four times, once in the middle of the night, for "illegal transaction with minors." This nasty-sounding charge amounted to an allegation that Marcum had hired as newsboys schoolboys who were selling papers during school hours. Each time the case was dismissed, but each time Marcum was arrested, booked, and forced to post a \$1,000 cash bond before he was permitted to return to office or bed.

The records of some officials who have opposed Marcum may account for their sensitivity to press coverage. In 1967, for example, Willie Kirk, then as now county judge, was tried and convicted of conspiring to defraud the federal government of funds sent into the county for flood relief. Willie explained that it was all due to a secretarial error, but he was sentenced to ten years in prison; he was later pardoned by that champion of pardons, Richard Nixon, and given back his rights of citizenship by Kentucky's Republican Governor Louie B. Nunn. During his awkward absence, his wife, Victoria, carried on.

Sheriff Thomas Muncy, who took office in 1977, also has reason to be thin-skinned. Last year Marcum investi-

gated a tip and charged in his paper that the sheriff was engaging in some extremely free enterprise — strip mining on land that did not belong to him, without a permit as required by state law, and without paying severance taxes on the coal. The sheriff greeted this countershow of enterprise coldly. Subsequently, when Wanda "Kitty" Cassidy, an employee of Pauline Smith's Housing Agency, wrote to *The Martin Countian* demanding retraction of a story, the letter, Marcum says, was delivered to the newspaper's office by a deputy sheriff. "But," he adds, "when I tried to subpoena a deputy to testify in my libel trial, the sheriff said he couldn't deliver the subpoena because he couldn't find his own deputy — and had no idea where he was. During this time, the lost deputy was drawing full-time pay."

Public Housing Agency Director Pauline Smith, sister-in-law of Willie Kirk, did not line up openly against Marcum and his newspaper until January 1980, when Joe Szakos insisted on seeing certain agency records that she refused to make public. Szakos appealed to the state attorney general, who ruled in November 1980 that Mrs. Smith did indeed have to open the books. Two weeks later, at a Housing Agency meeting, Szakos again demanded to see

agency records, whereupon Pauline's son Larry hit Szakos in the mouth. Szakos filed suit against Larry Smith for assault, and Pauline Smith later filed suit against Szakos for harassment.

In the meantime, Marcum's suits and troubles were piling up. The most serious of the suits (at least the most serious to date) concerned County Judge Willie Kirk. On June 14, 1978, *The Martin Countian* had carried a story across the top of its front page about a fight in County Court Clerk Sam Moore's office involving Judge Kirk, Clerk Moore, and jail matron Helen Horn. In the story, Mrs. Horn, wife of jailer Arvil Horn, said she had gone to the clerk's office to pick up some checks to cover jail expenses and was told by Kirk that she would get no more checks because of her refusal to cooperate politically. Words were exchanged, and Mrs. Horn allegedly told the judge that "I'll be standing there yelling sooeey [a word used to call hogs] when they take you back to the pen," whereupon Willie Kirk hit her in the chest and ran. Mrs. Horn was pursuing Kirk, she said, when she heard Moore coming up behind her and turned to give him the benefit of her attention. Asked later why she quit hitting Moore, Mrs. Horn, a stocky lady, said simply, "I got tired." *continued*

The story caused something of a sensation in Inez, not so much because Kirk had hit Mrs. Horn, but because he had then taken to his heels. He, his wife Victoria, Moore, and Moore's son Roger all denied that the fight had happened. Marcum carried their denials in the same spot across the top of the front page of the following edition. But in June 1979 — a year after the publication of the stories — Willie Kirk filed a libel suit against Marcum, asking \$350,000 in damages for himself and \$157,500 for his wife.

In December 1979, Marcum alleged a host of unusual goings-on in the courthouse and asked that a grand jury be impaneled to investigate. The next month a grand jury was called, but did not probe his charges; instead, it passed on the entire matter to the next grand jury, which was convened in December 1980. Marcum suspected that his charges were not going to be given sympathetic consideration when Wanda "Kitty" Cassidy, an employee of Pauline Smith, was named grand jury foreman, though she objected to the appointment and asked to be removed. On December 29, the grand jury report, issued by Cassidy, not only cleared all county officials and praised them for selfless public service, but charged Homer Martin and *The Martin Countian* with "reckless journalism." Marcum gave this report, too, top-of-the-front-page play.

Meanwhile, Willie Kirk had requested, and been granted, a change of venue to Pike County for his libel suit against Marcum. For a man of Kirk's political clout on his home grounds, this was a puzzling action, unless one accepts the explanation offered by Joe Szakos. "It's simple," he says. "[Attorney] John Kirk wanted to put us to as much travel, expense, and trouble as possible, keep us away from the newspaper office as much as possible, and maybe make us miss an edition. He made me travel all the way down to Pikeville every day for more than a week, and sit there all day waiting to be called to testify, and then get back here and try to get the paper out. I never was called. John knew he wasn't going to call me. He was just trying to hurt us as much as he could financially."

But before Willie Kirk's libel suit was heard, a few other minor actions had

taken place. Commonwealth Attorney Paul Deaton filed suit against Homer Marcum, *The Martin Countian*, et al, charging libel. (Marcum had run a series of news stories on Deaton's handling of several cases and an editorial calling on him to resign.) Wanda "Kitty" Cassidy filed suit against Marcum, Szakos, former reporter Michal Fauri, the newspaper, its cartoonist, and its printers — Landmark Community Newspapers — again charging libel. (Marcum had published articles and editorials criticizing her handling of her duties as grand jury foreman.)

**O**n April 30, 1981, a Pike Circuit Court jury deliberated less than twenty minutes before clearing Marcum of Willie Kirk's charge of libel. The fight with Mrs. Horn, the jury found, had indeed happened, as Marcum had reported, and no libel had occurred. On May 1, a Martin District Court jury found Larry Smith guilty of assault on Joe Szakos and fined him \$100.

This would seem welcome vindication for editor Marcum and reporter Szakos; every time they have gotten a case into court they have won. But they see a different side of the picture.

"There are still three cases against us pending," Marcum points out. "The suit by Pauline Smith against Joe, Paul Deaton's libel suit against me, and Kitty Cassidy's suit against everybody for libel. The trouble is that we have to fight each one of these, and each one costs time and money, and the money is getting very, very serious. Of course, each time they lose they have to pay court costs. But court costs are negligible, and they have their own attorney — John Kirk — who can sit back and file suits all day every day.

"So far," says Marcum, "I figure it has cost me more than eighteen thousand dollars to fight these things. It cost me more than fourteen thousand five hundred just to fight that silly libel suit of Willie's. I don't see how there can be any doubt that these people are trying to drive us out of business by litigation. It's harassment by litigation. If anything puts me under, it will be these suits. I don't think they should be able to use the courts to stifle freedom of the press."

Says Joe Szakos: "Do I feel our rights under the First Amendment are being endangered? You'd better believe I do. If they can keep us constantly in court with these flimsy, trumped-up charges, keep us away from our work and drain us with the expenses of the cases and the cost of travel, then, of course, we're in danger."

Attorney John Kirk does not agree with this assessment. "A case that requires ten days to prepare and four days to argue cannot be called frivolous," he says, referring to Judge Willie Kirk's lost libel suit against Marcum. "Judge Kirk tried to avoid litigation — something that Mr. Marcum does not mention. He tried to get Mr. Marcum to sit down with him and discuss the situation, but Mr. Marcum would not do it.

"Newsmen coming in here have repeatedly made this appear to be the case of a brave editor fighting against an entrenched political machine. The truth is quite a bit different. Mr. Marcum is financed by Massey Coal Company, and you will notice that his paper never carries anything negative or derogatory about Massey." (Marcum denies that he is financed by Massey, and insists he treats it as he does any coal company.)

"If there is a First Amendment issue here, it is in its misuse by Mr. Marcum," Kirk continues. "I think newsmen should be more jealous of the Amendment and guard it against misuse by people like Mr. Marcum."

A lot of people think Marcum has his own political ambitions and is fighting the Kirk faction to benefit Ray Fields, a former county judge now running for sheriff. Marcum denies this. "Homer's in Ray's corner, I guess," says Joe Szakos, "but not in his pocket. Ray doesn't tell him what to do."

"I don't want to say anything about that fight," says Property Valuation Administrator Betty Preece Muncy. "I'm not going to get into it."

"I think Homer tries to be fair, though," adds Brenda Collins, a Muncy assistant. "Homer puts out a good paper," says Effie Callihan, proprietor of the Inez Motel. "The trouble is that he tells it like it is, and when you tell it like it is in this county, you're apt to turn over something."

In the meantime, Marcum is, as he says, "winning my way broke." ■

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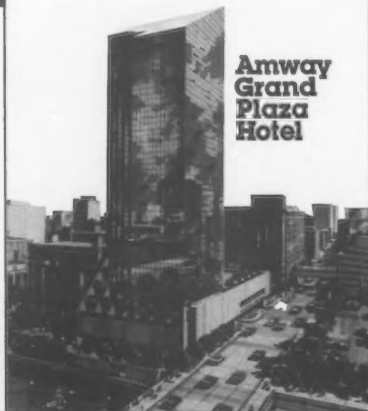
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# The pits: press coverage of the coal strike

by CURTIS SELTZER

Reporters said,  
No strike. The miners  
struck anyway.  
Did the press  
have to be caught  
flat-footed?

**C**oal miners need a "good ear" to do their work well. Underground, coal miners listen to the tympanic settling of the rock strata above them. When the "working" of the roof warns them that a fall is imminent, they scoot.

Reporters also need an alert ear to keep them clear of the hazards that dog their profession — the self-serving fact stated "objectively" as truth, the flip-but-colorful characterization that belittles an adversary, and the prediction whose frequent repetition transforms possibility into certainty.

The 1981 coal strike presented an opportunity to check the hearing of coal-beat journalists. Understanding collective bargaining in coal requires a grasp of, among other things, history, law, economics, mining technology, industry finance, workplace practices, and health and pension insurance.

Many journalists have lost their way, wandering through this maze. Yet it is critically important to get coal stories straight. Why? Because coal is the fuel of the future. Coal is likely to account for more than 40 percent of all the energy America consumes in 1995, the Department of Energy reported to Congress in March. Coal, the DOE said, should fire more than 62 percent of the electricity we generate in that year. Demand of this magnitude will require at least a doubling of 1980's coal produc-

tion — 835 millions tons — within fifteen years.

The 1981 coal strike provides a narrow window into this larger story.

On one side is the 130-company Bituminous Coal Operators' Association (BCOA), an internally divided group that now mines less than half of America's coal but about two-thirds of that dug east of the Mississippi River. The big companies — including the biggest companies in the industry — set BCOA policy. Consolidation Coal, a subsidiary of Conoco, has led the organization for most of its thirty-one-year history.

On the other side is the ninety-one-year-old United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), which represents perhaps two-thirds of the 240,000 coal workers employed in 1980. Dissension has plagued the UMWA over the last decade. One former president, W. A. "Tony" Boyle, is now in jail for murdering an unsuccessful rival. Another, Arnold Miller, a liberal reformer, retired in 1979 after his health deteriorated as rapidly as his leadership ability following his 1972 election. Miller's vice-president, Samuel Church, Jr., whom he had plucked from obscurity after several other union politicians had refused to run with him in his 1977 reelection bid, persuaded Miller to retire.

The first generation of reform leaders either died or departed in the nine years since their victory, but the democratic procedures they had written into the union's constitution survived. One of these — the right of the union's rank and file to vote on contracts — significantly changed collective bargaining. It added a "third party" to the negotiations; any deal had to wash with the union's membership. The BCOA now bargains with the mass of miners through their intermediaries, UMWA negotiators. In theory, the interests of the membership and those of its leaders are identical. In fact, they often aren't. Different pressures work on Washington-based Sam Church, who is up for reelection in

1982, than on the ordinary miner.

Church moved quickly to effect a détente with Consolidation Coal president Bobby R. Brown and the BCOA. In the era of "labor peace" following the tumultuous 111-day strike of 1977-1978, the UMW joined the industry in lobbying Washington for all-carrot-and-no-stick policies that promoted coal. In the months preceding the three-year contract's March 27 expiration, Church and Brown predicted that a successor would be born without a strike, or with a short one at worst. They agreed on a proposal on March 23.

When, on March 31, UMWA miners rejected the contract by more than 2 to 1, everyone was stunned. Everyone, that is, except the miners.

**P**ress coverage of the contract vote is a timely case study of coal reporting generally. How did the press explain the proposed contract? To what did reporters attribute its rejection?

In covering the coal negotiations, reporters had to avoid two traps. First, they had to cover the negotiations as a process involving potentially three, not two, sets of interests that were groping for common ground. Second, they had to read any offer as a miner would — or talk to as many miners as possible — to understand why an offer might be accepted or rejected.

To understand the rank-and-file perspective, it's necessary for a reporter to put himself in a miner's boots. A UMWA contract is more than an emotionless selling of labor for a price. It is much more akin to the vows of marriage. For three years — for every day of each year — the contract defines a miner's existence: what he can do; what he can't do; what kind of life he can provide for his family; how much time he can spend away from work; and, finally, how he sees himself in relationship to that which defines him — his employer. Most reporters for national

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publications never stepped out of their penny-loafers, and they were caught flat-footed when miners spurned the contract.

Press interpretation of the contract rejection was directly linked to the journalistic consensus that the 1981 negotiations would be settled without a strike, or a short one at most. BCOA's Brown and the UMWA's Church had carefully nurtured this vision. *Business Week* (November 17, 1980) said:

After one year in office UMW President Sam Church Jr. has replaced the directionless approach of his predecessor . . . with the philosophy that increasing jobs and wages for his members means working more closely with the industry. . . . He makes no secret of his desire to avoid a strike when the UMW contract expires . . . and he has helped head off — or end — numerous wildcat walkouts.

Church had hitched his political wagon to an image of competency and achieving a strike-free contract. BCOA helped him to create the impression among reporters that he was in control of a historically willful rank and file.

They succeeded. From the fall of 1980 through early March, beat reporters tapped out a steady cadence of sentences predicting a strike-free settlement. This headline in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* is typical: UMW, COAL FIRMS LOOK FOR FIRST PEACEFUL PACT IN 15 YEARS (December 11, 1980). *U.S. News & World Report* noted that "leaders of both the United Mine Workers and the Bituminous Coal Operators' Association say chances for a peaceful settlement are good this time" (December 29, 1980/January 5, 1981).

When Church and Brown agreed on a proposed contract on March 23, the press reported its highlights and what the negotiators thought of their handiwork. John Moody of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* quoted Church: "It's a good offer for the miners . . ." (March 24, 1981). Moody then tagged in this bottom-line evaluation: "The union president did not say so, but he appears to have won every major issue raised by the UMW in the months of negotiating — with the exception of the industry's demand that the union stop charging royalties on non-union coal." Moody's judgment came straight from a union press release, subsequently printed in

the *UMWA Bargaining Bulletin*, which said that the tentative agreement "included virtually every important demand made by the UMWA at the beginning of contract talks."

Moody was not alone in flag-waving the virtues of the contract. *Time* said the package "seemed overflowing with concessions to the miners" (April 13, 1981). Writing before the ratification vote, Ben A. Franklin of *The New York Times* locked on to the beam of conventional wisdom:

But the new three-year contract is so full of goodies that the union's last convention sent Mr. Church to the bargaining table to hold on to or to win that any tradeoffs with industry seem small by comparison [March 24, 1981].

This is not the forum to debate fully the merits of the rejected proposal. A careful comparison of the UMWA's 1979 convention-endorsed collective bargaining objectives and the proposed contract shows that it failed to achieve most of that wish-list of "goodies." More to the point is that the March 23 offer included much new language that miners saw as a drastic redefinition of their workplace "marriage" vows. Everyone saw that the proposal had improvements — higher wages, a new dental plan, more off-work time, pensions for widows — but miners also saw long-term losses. When reporters finally got around to questioning the miners, they said that the new language threatened the survival of the union, their job security and job rights, and many workplace practices that had evolved over the years. The wages and benefits were a nice apple, they said, but they were being asked to give away the pie.

In these circumstances, good reporters tell their readers what's good and bad in a contract as each of the three sides sees it. But in this case, the benefits to the operators were only rarely evaluated, and never in as much detail as were the benefits to miners. Similarly, most stories included the dollar costs to the industry, but only late in the ratification process, when the contract seemed to be on the ropes, did stories mention what it would cost the miners.

An exception to this pattern was a piece by Bob Arnold of *Business Week*

that looked into the economic balance sheet of the offer. In his article, which appeared in the April 6 issue but was written before the March 31 vote, Arnold characterized the proposal as "extremely expensive," but pointed out:

The union won a 35% increase in wages and benefits over three years, but this is considerably smaller than recent settlements in steel and autos. . . .

The tentative agreement is more evenly balanced than the 54% contract the union won in 1974 or the 39% package — laced with industry takeaways — that culminated a 111-day strike in 1978.

For their part, industry executives expect the new pact will enhance last year's 8% productivity increase in UMW mines, which could mitigate much of the increased costs that are generated by the new pact.

Continuing gains of even half the size would largely offset the new pact's costs [estimated to be] . . . 7% in the first year and 5% in each of the next two years. . . .

After the miners scuttled the offer, the press had to explain the rejection. After all, everyone — the BCOA, Church, reporters — had been saying that 1981 was going to be different. Warren Brown reflected this sentiment in his April 3 *Washington Post* "News Analysis":

But it wasn't supposed to be this way — not this year when both union and industry representatives began their talks vowing to demonstrate the "stability" of the domestic soft-coal industry to the nation and the world. . . .

Brown and other reporters seemed to feel that a strike shouldn't happen because it would be bad for both sides, as the negotiators said. By writing their stories as though the no-strike prediction were an established fact, the press had puffed its credibility into a balloon that miners had just popped.

Naturally, reporters looked for theories to explain why miners had done what for six months their stories had said they would not do. The first round of theorizing yielded journalistic thumbsuckers and self-serving quotes from the negotiators.

Thumbsuckers first. Ben Franklin of *The New York Times* said the vote against the contract "was interpreted . . . by deeply dismayed union and management leaders more as a cultural phenomenon than as a strictly labor

movement phenomenon" (April 2, 1981). This interpretation was in keeping with Franklin's decade-long "cultural" analysis of political events involving Appalachian people. During the last strike, Franklin assigned motives to Appalachian miners based on their "Celtic ethnicity . . . the Anglo-Saxon, not to say Druid, heritage of southern mountain coal towns" (March 5, 1978). While many UMWA and BCOA leaders may share Franklin's insights into the Druid ethnicity of miners, for unknown reasons they chose to share them largely — and perhaps exclusively — with the veteran *Times* man.

Next, self-servers. If you propose marriage and you're shot down, your normal reaction is to say there's something flawed about the person to whom you proposed. The UMWA negotiators, accordingly, belittled their membership. In an April 2 piece, *The Wall Street Journal's* team, Thomas Petzinger, Jr. and Carol Hymowitz, quoted "some" anonymous union officials who suggested that:

. . . miners had wanted — and expected — a strike. "It's fishing season in Appalachia," said one official at the union headquarters in Washington. "And a lot of miners are off in Fort Lauderdale on vacations they booked months ago," he added.

*Newsweek*, in an otherwise quite solid April 13 story, followed the *Journal's* lead:

. . . even UMW officials concede that some miners may have voted no this time around because they expected a spring break. . . . "It's fishing time in Appalachia," says one UMW operative.

**O**bviously, it was in the political interest of the UMWA leadership to suggest that their proposal had been rejected, not on its merits, but because a hidden agenda — the fishing urge — conspired against them. If national publications repeat "theories" of this sort, they have an obligation to see whether they have any basis in truth. And, barring that, at the very least to point out why a Church-appointed "operative" might suggest that the rank-and-file miner would forgo thousands of dollars in income for a dozen catfish and an occasional bass.

Then there was the "union politics" theory.



Sam Church, president of UMWA, faces angry miners in Wheeling, West Virginia, two days before the first contract vote

UMWA and BCOA negotiators alike blamed rank-and-file dissidents and opportunistic union politicians for the defeat. Eldon Callen, UMWA press secretary, told *The Washington Star* that "officials at the union's Washington headquarters felt that some candidates for regional union offices had conspired to defeat the contract" (April 3, 1981).

The BCOA also took this tack in its explanation of the rejection. A widely quoted statement issued by Bobby R. Brown said: ". . . the majority of the miners voting apparently chose to listen to dissidents who were not involved in the bargaining process and who, for whatever reasons, misrepresented the Agreement and assured its defeat."

It is, of course, proper to report these opinions; they give the reader one handle with which to grasp a puzzling reality. But if one side charges political opportunism, then it's the reporter's obligation to alert the reader to the possible political motives behind the charge and try to determine the truth of the observation. Did nearly 70,000 miners vote down a contract because political opportunists bamboozled them into believing a good proposal was a stinker? No reporter turned up any evidence to suggest that union politics was a significant fac-

tor in the contract rejection.

Another theory — this one crafted by Bob Arnold of *Business Week* — was that the contract was rejected because of the "democratic structure that reformers brought to the UMW in 1972" (April 20, 1981). The union's brand of democracy, Arnold wrote, "requires such sophisticated administrative, political, and bargaining skills that no UMW president has been able to turn it into an effective vehicle for negotiating contracts . . ." The *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* went even further, editorializing that rejection amounted to miners "flouting . . . their own leadership through the very voting rights obtained for them in the democratization of their once autocratic union" (April 6, 1981).

The nub of this argument is that miners were victimized by too much democracy, as evidenced by their being allowed to vote on their contract. Forgotten is the historical fact that miners accepted the first contract offer in 1974 — the first year of the democratized bargaining — because they could see that it was a hell of a lot better than the old one. The reasoning implicit in the *Post-Gazette* editorial endorses the questionable notion that unions don't need internal democracy to promote

democratic values. It also implies that in a truly democratic union the membership endorses whatever its representatives recommend.

When reporters interviewed miners, they were less likely to fall for the snap judgment and the self-serving statement. Iver Peterson of *The New York Times*, for example, interviewed miners in northern West Virginia who cited the substantive reasons for rejection. Robert Kreiter, a twenty-seven-year-old college graduate, told Peterson, "I didn't vote to strike, I voted against a bad contract" (April 6, 1981). Similarly, Jackie Barker, a local union president from Dehue, West Virginia, told Jim Ragsdale of the *Charleston Gazette*: "The men are going to get a new set of false teeth and lose their jobs" (March 28, 1981).

Of the three major dailies — *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Wall Street Journal* — the *Post*'s coverage was the thinnest, both measured in column inches and depth of understanding. The *Post*'s weak showing is puzzling in the light of its resident talent on coal stories. Ward Sinclair and Bill Peterson, both ex-coal reporters for the Louisville *Courier-Journal* who are now with the *Post*, are savvy and perceptive. But the strike story was given to a newcomer to coal, Warren Brown, who never grasped the political complexities involved in the bargaining and never quite caught on to the fact that the union is its members and the Church-led negotiators were their representatives. The *Times*, for all of Franklin's lame hobbyhorses, was better than the *Post*. The *Journal* was — with breakdowns here and there — the best of the three. *Business Week*'s Bob Arnold, an ex-*Journal* reporter, also excelled, despite his errant foray into political psychoanalysis.

**R**ejection of an offer is a normal part of collective bargaining. Negotiators do it all the time. What's newsworthy here is that the membership rejected a joint offer made to them by the negotiators. Logically, that should have led the press to examine the negotiators and the offer they tendered, instead of blaming the miners who spurned it. Logic did not prevail.

Another process of rejection that went

on in the negotiations until mid-May was equally newsworthy, but received little analysis. This was the BCOA's refusal to resume negotiations following the March 31 rank-and-file vote. For five weeks, the BCOA's hard line amounted to a lockout within a strike.

While the press dug for the "motives" behind the miners' vote, equal effort was not paid to explaining BCOA motives. Franklin did not report that the BCOA's refusal was a "cultural phenomenon." *Newsweek* did not say that Bobby Brown wanted to go fishing. Industry politics was rarely mentioned.

What's most interesting about the press's failure to interpret BCOA's motives is what reporters have chosen to ignore or belittle.

Sam Church has a theory:

"I believe that the big coal operators want a strike because their masters in big oil want a strike. They want a strike to break the union. They want a strike to break the smaller coal operators. And they want a strike to give them the opportunity to pick up the pieces of a fragmented and bankrupt coal industry" [Doug Harbrecht, *Pittsburgh Press*, March 22, 1981.]

UMWA negotiators floated this idea in mid-March when they were having trouble coaxing the BCOA to get down to hard bargaining. No major daily took the UMWA's charge seriously. Some denigrated Church's idea by quoting the BCOA's scoff, that this was "Sam's oil stuff." (*Pittsburgh Press*, March 22, 1981).

Reporters on this story know that the oil companies have invested heavily in coal and other mining subsidiaries. Even as the negotiations dragged along, the business pages were filled with stories of energy-company deals for coal and mining companies. Gulf Oil paid \$325 million in cash for a western coal company; SOHIO bought Kennecott for \$1.77 billion and bought \$700-million worth of coal mines and reserves from U.S. Steel; SOCAL offered \$4 billion to increase its 20 percent share of Amax, Inc., the third largest coal producer; Amherst Coal, one of the few remaining independents, was scooped up by Diamond Shamrock in a stock swap worth \$201 million.

The press reported these deals in detail. Hymowitz and Petzinger, for example, wrote:

Coal has become an industry of flush conglomerates. In only 15 years the oil, steel and utility industries have doubled their control of U.S. coal production to nearly 50% [*Wall Street Journal*, March 12, 1981].

**A**rt Pine in *The Washington Post* pulled together an April 5 survey of the oil industry, headlined BIG OIL: FROM THE WELLS TO THE PITS, that said the oil companies were buying "heavily into the related coal and mineral-extraction industries. . . ." But as of this writing, in mid-May, not a single coal-beat reporter had asked the obvious question: What, if anything, does the oil takeover of coal mean for collective bargaining? Reporters accepted the BCOA's smirk about "Sam's oil stuff" without ever looking into it for themselves.

Was the BCOA's refusal to bargain in April and early May related to the oil industry's ability to ride out a strike in its coal operations, or to a desire on its part to impose decentralized bargaining on coal similar to the pattern in oil? I'm not sure. And one reason I'm not is that the press did not write the stories that would help me to figure it out.

Strikes are always settled, even coal strikes. Reporters affect collective bargaining by the manner in which they interpret the issues, motives, and bargaining dynamics. In this instance, I suspect that press coverage probably lengthened the strike by failing to analyze the BCOA's bargaining strategy, preferring to blame the impasse on emotional, excessively democratic, feisty, and fishy miners.

Perhaps coal coverage will shape up next time around. Two ideas come to mind that would help tighten press analysis. First, reporters should develop as many contacts among the rank and file of the union and the industry as possible. In that way they can avoid becoming prisoners of the information the negotiators feed them. Second, and for the same reason, reporters need to establish ties to independent coal observers — stock analysts, bankers, journalists, economists, academics, consultants, and others with demonstrated expertise. Independent information will broaden the beat reporter's data base and deepen his ability to extract truth from it. ■



# ON THE JOB

*The Review welcomes comments and reflections on the working life of journalists, to be published in this space from time to time.*

## For reporters only

by STEPHEN P. MORIN  
and CHRISTOPHER SCANLAN

In theory, reporters learn from editors. In practice, reporters learn from one another. Few editors have the time or inclination to act as teachers. "Most reporters don't get the chance to work under the wise old editor who can show them the ropes and show them how to become better," says Jerry Uhrhammer, president of Investigative Reporters and Editors. "They have to learn on their own, and it's a very difficult thing."

Opportunities for reporters to exchange information are limited, particularly if the paper they work on is small. As a result, many reporters feel isolated and frustrated — forced, as it were, to invent for themselves the techniques they could more easily acquire through dialogue with other reporters.

Nationally, there are seminars, workshops, and advanced-training programs that bring people in the news business together. But, for all their merits, few of these programs allow reporters to learn from reporters. The news-side training that is available often is either geared for editors and managers or is limited to seminars that discuss particular topics, such as the economy or energy. None of the major programs we are familiar with allows reporters to shape an agenda, choose the speakers (if any) they want to hear, or discuss specific problems and techniques of the business.

The Chicago-based Inland Daily Press Association runs training seminars for newspaper managers, but not for reporters. The California Newspaper Publishers' Association puts on annual conferences for editors and publishers, but none for reporters. The Southern Newspaper Publishers' Association Foundation runs twelve seminars a year, but only four of the seminars cover news-

side topics and, to those, says executive director Reed Sarratt, "more editors come . . . than reporters."

The American Press Institute, the newspaper industry's center for continuing education, once devoted itself almost exclusively to news-side seminars, says API director Frank Quine. Today, half of API seminars deal with circulation, promotion, and advertising. Seminars for the news side generally are limited to editors. Of the thirty seminars listed in API's 1980-81 bulletin, only three are open to reporters. Quine says that API would like to offer more seminars for reporters, but that newspapers are reluctant to send a reporter for five to nine days of training when it can send an "editor and circulation director who [can come] back and have some influence on an entire staff."

**I**nvestigative Reporters and Editors has sponsored more than two dozen conferences that have included workshops on reporting issues. But the discussion sessions sometimes are unwieldy, and participants complain that IRE conferences are afflicted with the same "journalist-as-star" disease that contributed to the death of the *More* conventions during the 1970s. One of the two keynote speakers at the IRE national convention this year will be Dan Rather.

The Washington Journalism Center each year offers ten four-day workshops for reporters and editors on such specific subjects as foreign policy and the economy. The center selects the topics and speakers, arranges the agenda, and invites participants. The purpose of the workshops is to talk about, for example, urban problems, not about the profession, says WJC director Julius Duscha. Shop talk, he adds, takes place at dinner or at the bar.

The Modern Media Institute in St. Petersburg, Florida, offers writing seminars for small (fifteen participants) groups of editors, editorial writers, and

reporters, says Roy Peter Clark, the institute's director. The goal, Clark says, "is to reward and inspire talented journalists, to send them back to their papers with a renewed interest in good writing." However, with only two workshops for reporters planned this year, at most thirty reporters will have that chance.

Where do reporters go to discuss issues in the profession or problems in the reporting and writing of particular stories? Unfortunately, many have few alternatives to the barroom bull session.

We believe that such issues and problems would be better discussed at the conference table. Accordingly, we believe that a program of workshops for working reporters — perhaps sponsored by a consortium of news organizations and organized by a journalism school — should be started. Ideally, these workshops would be a hybrid of programs now in existence, but with one key difference: reporters should have control. Reporters should decide what topics will be discussed, whom to invite as speakers, and the goals of each workshop. Reporters around the country with whom we have spoken have produced a list of possible topics for these workshops: reporting and the law, ethics, research techniques, reading legal and financial documents, developing and dealing with sources, covering a beat, and story organization and writing.

Workshops could combine the topical focus of the Washington Journalism Center seminars with the emphasis on writing found at the Modern Media Institute. They could stress reporting techniques as the IRE seminars do, and feature the kind of let-your-hair-down discussions that API is known for encouraging. Guest speakers could act as catalysts for the workshops.

But the primary focus would be on reporting and writing — not on the pop stars of politics or journalism or on the ins and outs of making money from newspapers. ■

*The authors are reporters for The Providence Journal-Bulletin.*

# BOOKS

## The arrangement

### Portraying the President: The White House and the News Media

by Michael Baruch Grossman and Martha Joynt Kumar

The Johns Hopkins University Press.  
358 pp. \$26.50; \$9.95 paper

by ROBERT SHERRILL

It was just "a little White House ceremony," cooked up by the Small Business Administration, and it took only about ten minutes of President Carter's time. But Michael Grossman and Martha Kumar remind us that for the White House Bubble Machine no event is considered insignificant if something can be squeezed out of it to induce the press to portray the president as a wonderful guy.

For this particular "ripple in the President's schedule," say Grossman and Kumar, "the arrangements involved participation by eight units from the political divisions: [Hamilton] Jordan's office, Domestic Policy Staff, the Press Office, the speechwriters, the appointments office, the photo unit, Congressional Liaison, and the staff Secretary," not to mention the "less obvious . . . roles played by the National Park Service, the Navy, the Secret Service, and the Executive Protection Service." Fortunately for the taxpayers, this bit of political theater was conducted at home. "If the SBA award ceremony had taken place [away from] the White House, the Travel and Telegraph Office would have made the arrangements. It would have rented an airplane for the press, made hotel reservations, and arranged all local transportation. It also would have rented a room for press use, stocked it with paper, phones, and rented typewriters, and provided whatever else was necessary for reporters to send their stories to their organizations."

Robert Sherrill is White House correspondent for The Nation.

In short, the White House spends a great deal of our money and its time on propaganda and publicity. Even the relatively modest Gerald Ford gave over a third of every morning's strategy session with senior advisers to figuring out better ways to exploit the press. And the press spends a great deal of its own money and time cooperating with the White House to that end.

Theoretically, of course, the press could avoid being manipulated. Reporters could stay away from those hokey little ceremonies. Their editors could render down the lard in the typical presidential press conference to the space it deserves — about five inches on page 13. There is no law that says ninety reporters had to fly off to record the deathless banalities of President Carter at the breakfast table in Clinton, Massachusetts (to use another example from this book), or that columnist Joseph Kraft had to float White House adviser McGeorge Bundy's militaristic balloons. Physical threats were not required to make White House reporters so cooperative that Carter's press secretary Jody Powell would say of a select group treated to private sessions in his office, "Often you don't even have to tell them what can or can't be used. Those guys know."

Everybody is aware that one very good reason the press accepts the White House's self-serving leaks, puffery, background pep talks, and staged performances is that this is one way, albeit a sometimes grubby way, to get news. Grossman and Kumar see the swap-off as part of a complex "partnership." In return for carrying water for the elephants and shoveling out the donkey stalls, reporters and editors get to watch part — a rather small part — of the inner circus and sometimes even get to speak to the ringmaster. It gives them a pleasant glow of importance, and in return they

put together stories that make the circus seem much more glamorous and important than it really is. Through their promotion and participation, it becomes *their* circus, too. They become more than observers, and thereby inspire presidents (to use a quote from Richard Cheney, Ford's chief of staff) "to think about the media as part of the process in the same way that Congress is part of the process." A risky business.

Before going further, I'll pause to introduce Grossman and Kumar. They are political science teachers at Towson (Maryland) State University, about forty miles from the White House. If they hadn't done such a good job of it, I would resent a couple of academics dragging out this old subject for another thumping. The Washington press has been subjected to nearly as much analysis and criticism as the presidency. Much of the criticism has come from the



profession itself. It has admitted, and has been told countless times by outsiders (what Grossman and Kumar tell us again), that the free press is a captive of certain routines, rituals, taboos, corporate lusts, professional ambitions, and status symbols — and that the captivity is nowhere more in evidence than in and around the White House. All of which comes as no great revelation to White House reporters, who are perfectly alert to the fact — and expressed their alertness to G & K in the bluntest terms — that they are constantly victimized by manipulations of one kind or another.

This book does not break much new ground. Very few of its conclusions will surprise the press or press-watchers. What is so remarkable about *Portraying the President* is that it comes across with such freshness. I think it's because Grossman and Kumar really care. They spent four years, 1975 through 1979,

drifting in and out of the White House, interviewing dozens of reporters and White House staff people, reading scads of books and documents. The success of *Portraying* comes from its comprehensiveness and from G & K's gift for telling this somewhat schizophrenic story in such a way that one feels sympathy for the frustrations of both sides.

And let me tell you, it takes some doing to raise sympathy for the *other* side. Most of the quotes we get from presidents and their courtiers drip with contempt for the press. Those people apparently do look upon reporters and editors as a bunch of vain toadies who will roll over to be scratched by any high official.

Unfortunately, the White House's dealings with the press elite have given it some reason for coming to that conclusion. Whereas the regular press corps, say G & K, are treated by White

House officials as "tradesmen who must enter through a special side door to conduct their business," the top of the media pyramid "are invited in the front door and asked to stay for dinner." And who are among the supposed elite? Ah, you know them. The corporate brass; those familiar faces who, buried deep in the mud of status quo, are so accurately called anchorpersons; those columnists who have been peddling the same portentous clichés for decades. White House officials feel comfortable with them, for they have refined the art of barter to its ultimate.

Time Inc., for instance. "Nixon agreed to grant an interview to Hugh Sidey, for whom he had little personal use, according to John Ehrlichman, in exchange for his appearance on *Time*'s cover. Sidey said that that was the only time he got to see Nixon privately during the entire five and one-half years of his administration. 'It was a straight trade off,' he commented. 'Nixon was going to Europe, and for having the cover, he gave an interview.'"

But the most willing barterers are in television. Shortly after Barbara Walters went with ABC she got an interview with President Ford. Walter Cronkite, wanting the same for CBS, approached Ford's press aide Ronald Nessen. "According to Nessen, when he asked the correspondent why he wanted to see the President, Cronkite replied, 'You know the name of the game.' Cronkite did get his interview, Nessen said, after he agreed that he was 'paying a courtesy call' and would not ask the President substantive questions." As it happened, on the day of the interview there were charges that Ford had helped squelch an earlier Watergate investigation; nevertheless, "since Cronkite had agreed to the ground rules, the interview was limited to questions that Ford and his staff thought he could handle easily."

Theodore White wrote Johnson's press aide, George Reedy, to ask for an interview with the president. As G & K point out, the letter virtually promised Johnson a puff piece for validating White's credentials as an insider. "I can assure you that the portrait I have of him now is that [of] one of our greatest political leaders entering on an historic ad-



ministration," wrote White, adding, "This will remain my portrait whatever his attitude toward me."

There is something a bit pathetic about some elements of the press, because it takes so little to guarantee their cooperation. G & K argue that "because many columnists and reporters had close relations with Henry Kissinger, they minimized his role in the protraction of the Vietnam conflict, his ignorance of international economic policy, and his possible involvement in the Nixon administration's use of methods of dubious legality to track down unauthorized leaks of information. They became collaborators with Kissinger in his largely successful efforts to portray himself as a White House official whose involvement in maintaining America's world position was too important to subject him to close scrutiny on these types of questions." And how did he win their collaboration? Simply by talking with them. They were overwhelmed. Big-shot journalists were ever so grateful for a little attention from the maestro. He made them feel very important by offering to a select group the one thing that newsmen must have for survival: he returned their phone calls.

The pressures to cooperate are most intense, of course, on those newspapers that can do the White House the most good. And the payoffs are the richest. The competition between *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* is exploited beautifully, with each paper yearning to be first, even if it is first with trivia. "Reporters for both the *Post* and the *Times* agreed that their newspapers make too much of the President. . . . 'I have had stories on page one just because the President burped,' [Martin Tolchin of the *Times*] said. 'I don't think they belonged there at all.'" John Herbers "reflected on the tendency of the *Post* and *Times* to inflate stories about the presidency. 'It's been difficult for me as an editor on my own paper [the *Times*] to discourage the prominent display of White House stories which were not important.'" He mentioned a *Post* exclusive interview with Ford "in which he really said nothing, and I couldn't find anything in the story that we didn't already know. Yet it was

prominently displayed high up on the front page of the *Post*." The very next day the *Times* had its own exclusive interview, just as empty of news and just as prominently displayed. The only difference in the stories was in their headlines. The *Post*: NO RANCOR OR REGRET. The *Times*: REGRET AND RELIEF.

If submitting to manipulation makes people at the *Times*, *Post*, *Star*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, and the networks uncomfortable, at least they are spared the frustration of newsmen who work for organizations that the White House stage managers have no interest in manipulating, which means most of the regional press. Pat Sloyan of *Newsday* complained, "If the *New York Times* wants someone to call them back, they get it. If I want to see some of the same people, I have to stand on their doorstep."

**T**oo bad. But much of the fault rests with the people who own and run the regional press. They help maintain the vicious circle that shuts out their own reporters. A Ford adviser said he didn't need to waste his time with regional reporters because he could get in their papers by dealing with the establishment press. "What," he asked rhetorically, "is the *San Francisco Chronicle*? The *San Francisco Chronicle* hasn't had an original thought in twenty years. The *San Francisco Chronicle* is AP, UPI, the *Washington Post*, and the *New York Times* service. That is the *San Francisco Chronicle* as far as national news is concerned. That means you are right back dealing with Phil Shabecoff, Ed Walsh, Frank Cormier, and Helen Thomas. No matter how you cut it . . . you come right back to that."

One bureau chief for a regional newspaper complained that he was frustrated in trying to break the circle because his own bosses "have gotten increasingly into the hands of readership survey groups whom I view as the equivalent of people who came into television and told them to have funny news." Andrew Glass of the Cox newspapers said, "It's a lot easier for me to get into several newspapers in the chain with a story about Amy [Carter] than a story about

an important policy decision. If they use both, the Amy story is likely to get page one, while the policy story will be buried on page twenty-nine."

There aren't many flaws in this book. But I would say that one flaw is G & K's occasional failure to practice what they preach. They argue that by exaggerating the power of the president, newsmen hurt the political process. One may fairly add that by exaggerating the power of some elements of the press, G & K hurt the newsgathering process. I'm talking about their effort to create elitism where it doesn't exist. They acknowledge that political columnists haven't much following these days, at least compared to what they had in the 1960s; but then, using language better left to journalistic groupies, they try to rescue several columnists from that deserted ash heap. I find the effort a sentimental joke. (Not to pick on Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, but they are two of the proffered columnists of great influence. And what have they done that makes them so influential? Well, Novak ruminated a while and came up with this gem for G & K: "The rise of John Ehrlichman was first reported in our column." Hey, wow!) I'm also talking about G & K's claim that *Washington Week in Review* and *Agronsky and Company* have "an important following" in Washington "among an audience that uses the programs to rate the President, his chief lieutenants, his allies, and his adversaries. . . . Their judgments, which reflect the opinions of Washington insiders, are closely followed by White House officials." I simply don't believe it, and until G & K supply me with polls and mountains of affidavits to prove the contrary, I will go on refusing to believe that Washington's policymakers and press corps are made up of such nincompoops that they sit around watching, for guidance, two talk shows that should have no influence on any group but blind shut-ins who do not read newspapers, who have no contact with the outside world, and who are incapable of making even the most elementary political appraisals of their own.

I'm as fond of offhand judgments as G & K apparently are, but this is sup-



posed to be at least a semi-scholarly book, and some of the airy opinions they set adrift need to be tied down. For instance, what evidence do they have to accompany the charge that "because some reporters know their editors or producers will reward them for exclusive stories and pictures featuring the President's personal life, they may exchange favorable coverage of the President in the policy area for access to him and his family." Sure, they *may* do that — and I'd be willing to bet that most TV reporters would do it in a flash — but it's a pretty hefty accusation for our two scholars to make without some substantive examples. If Grossman and Kumar have any, they don't show them here.

And finally, they toss off the judgment that "sometimes close relationships between the President and bureau chiefs can produce benefits for the President." I'm willing to believe it, but from their four years of research I would expect a few contemporary examples. The fact that they had to go back twenty years for their one and only example strikes me as a kind of backhanded endorsement of news executives. The one fingered here is Blair Clark, once an executive with CBS. According to the quoted recollection of CBS's White House correspondent Robert Pierpoint, President Kennedy called Clark to challenge a story Pierpoint had broadcast earlier in the day and thereupon Clark ordered Pierpoint to go on the air and "deny my own story." I asked Clark if that's the way he remembered the episode. He said he didn't order Pierpoint to deny anything but rather ordered him to include in his next broadcast that *Kennedy* had denied it, which is quite a different matter. Take your choice of whose memory you want to trust, but since G & K didn't give Clark a chance for rebuttal I'll give him space here for his final remark that "this is a perfect illustration of the way academics operate on the assumption that all journalists, especially at the management level, are either corruptible or corrupt."

I don't mean to make too much of my complaints. Mostly they come down to a matter of difference of opinion. What I do want to emphasize is that *Portraying*

*the President* is a solid survey of the White House press operation that raises again the everlasting question of how much involvement and how much detachment go into the best journalism.

## Near and dear

### Minnesota Rag: The Dramatic Story of the Landmark Supreme Court Case That Gave New Meaning to Freedom of the Press

by Fred W. Friendly  
Random House. 223 pp. \$12.95

by NAT HENTOFF

During the trial of Carol Burnett's defamation suit against the *National Enquirer*, the attorney for that supermarket rag noted plaintively: "You can't say the First Amendment applies to everybody except the *Enquirer*." However, there were no ringing affirmations of that claim from the respectable press, much of which agrees with Reg Murphy, former publisher and editor of the *San Francisco Examiner*, who calls the *Enquirer* a "disgrace to journalism."

Yet, *all* of the press owes its freedom from prior restraint to an even more scandalous sheet, Minneapolis's *Saturday Press*, whose publisher, Jay M. Near — anti-Semitic, anti-Catholic, racist, and anti-labor — is the first half of *Near v. Minnesota*, the 1931 Supreme Court decision that has ever since been cited whenever any publication has been threatened with censorship. (In the nine opinions in the Pentagon Papers case, for instance, *Near* was ubiquitous).

In commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the deliverance of the press from prior restraint, Fred Friendly has seized on what Thomas Jefferson used to call "a morsel of genuine history," creating a paradigm of what writing on constitutional law ought to be, but seldom is. Not only is Friendly persistently lucid on the legal arguments and precedents, but he also goes after the rest of the story — the quirky individuals, events, and clashing passions that are

Nat Hentoff, staff writer for *The Village Voice* and *The New Yorker*, is the author of *The First Freedom: The Tumultuous History of Free Speech in America*.

usually ignored in accounts of seminal cases. Richard Harris is masterful at this kind of wholeness of constitutional history (*Freedom Spent*), as have been Anthony Lewis (*Gideon's Trumpet*) and Irving Brant (*The Bill of Rights*); but there are all too few such books for the reader without an LLB or a desire to get one.

As a prelude, for example, to the enactment of the 1925 Minnesota Public Nuisance Bill — the gag law at the core of *Near v. Minnesota* — Friendly details the raffish ambience of Minneapolis in those years. And a wide-open city it was, with politicians and a good many journalists on the take, while "the respectable newspapers permitted themselves to squint at the link between those who broke the law and those charged with its enforcement." From such rich compost grew the scandal rags, flaying politicians for their public and private indulgences alike.

To quash a predecessor of *Near's Saturday Press*, two state legislators successfully introduced a bill which, as Friendly writes, "permitted a single judge, without jury, to enjoin a newspaper or magazine forever because he considered it to be 'obscene, lewd and lascivious . . . or malicious, scandalous and defamatory.'" It was insufficient defense for the publication to prove the truth of the statement at issue. The material had to have also been published "with good motives and justifiable ends" — however any jurist defined those desiderata.

Because this Public Nuisance Bill was aimed only at mere rags, the "responsible" Minnesota newspapers did not editorialize against it; and indeed, drafting assistance for the gag law was provided by a number of prominent lawyers hired for that purpose by a group of the state's more respectable publishers. Further proof that the First Amendment, then as now, is too important to be entrusted only to the press.

When Jay Near's *Saturday Press* was silenced under this bill, the only support he initially gained was from the American Civil Liberties Union, which declared it would appeal the Minnesota gag law to the Supreme Court as "a menace to the freedom of the country."

*continued*

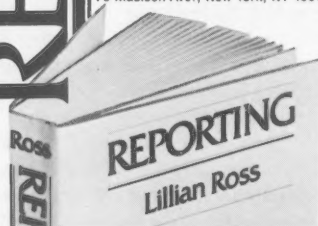
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## BOOKS

But the ACLU was elbowed aside by the imperious Colonel Robert Rutherford McCormick, publisher of the *Chicago Tribune* and a fervent, even ferocious, champion of the First Amendment. Aside from their hostility to censorship, McCormick and Near shared another enthusiasm in that the Colonel, Friendly observes, had "a reputation as a bigot, and words like 'kike' and 'nigger' were part of his vocabulary."

Or, as Felix Frankfurter once noted, "It is a fair summary of history to say that the safeguards of liberty have been forged in controversies involving not very nice people."

With McCormick's financial aid and the legal leadership of the Colonel's old law partner, Weymouth Kirkland, *Saturday Press* advanced on the Supreme Court. There were few ready allies among other publishers, Harry Chandler of the *Los Angeles Times* advising McCormick to let "sleeping dogs lie. If we go to the Supreme Court now and that tribunal upholds the Minnesota court, we will have stirred up the matter to a point strongly conducive to similar legislation in other states." (So it was too that in 1979, the *Los Angeles Times*, along with *The Washington Post* and other papers, advised *The Progressive* to "let sleeping dogs lie" when its article on the H-bomb was censored for a time through court action brought by the Justice Department.)

Undaunted, Colonel McCormick, tugging Near in his wake, pursued the case until the Supreme Court, for the first time in American history, agreed to rule directly on the constitutionality of prior restraint. As throughout the book, Friendly illuminates not only what the decision said, but also *how* the decision was arrived at — the widely diverse backgrounds and temperaments of the Justices in conflict, along with the crucial role played by the new Chief Justice, Charles Evans Hughes. In an essential cautionary note, Friendly also emphasizes the skittish relationship between liberty and the sheer happenstances of history.

Had former Chief Justice William Howard Taft and Associate Justice Edward Sanford not died in 1930, for instance, the Minnesota gag law would

almost certainly have been upheld, thereby perhaps shaping "press-freedom cases for the next half century." The new Chief Justice "was acutely aware that the eyes of many state legislatures would be watching the Court's resolution of the constitutionality of the Minnesota gag law to determine whether such a curb on press abuses should be enacted in their own states."

As it turned out, only by the narrowest of margins, 5 to 4, was censorship of the press declared unconstitutional. With exceptions. As every schoolchild might know, if his teacher did, Hughes, in the majority opinion, left a crack in the door for government, in time of war, to forbid publication that "might present actual obstruction to its recruiting service" or reveal "the sailing dates of transports or the number and location of troops." But as for the Minnesota Public Nuisance Law itself, the majority struck it down as "the essence of censorship." And Hughes enthusiastically quoted James Madison: "Some degree of abuse is inseparable from the proper use of everything, and in no instance is this more true than in that of the press." Further, "it is better to leave a few of its noxious branches to their luxurious growth, than, by pruning them away, to injure the vigour of those yielding the proper fruits."

And indeed, Hughes added, the Minnesota gag law not only pruned but actually destroyed because, under it, a "newspaper or periodical" was not only suppressed but "further publication is made punishable as a contempt."

Of those newspapers applauding the decision, it was the *New York Herald Tribune*, focusing on the undeniably noxious nature of *The Saturday Press*, that made a particularly vital point: "The very fact that the exercise of liberty of the press in this momentous case came before the Supreme Court in the least favorable light adds a buttress of steel to the constitutional guaranty."

But even steel can buckle. There are no impermeable guarantees; and that is why, in the endless strife over the First Amendment, it is so valuable to have such knowledgeable and inspiring war correspondents as Fred Friendly.

## 1984 and all that

### Electronic Nightmare: The New Communications and Freedom

by John Wicklein

The Viking Press. 320 pp. \$15.95

By FRED GRAHAM

In just four years, we can all breathe a sigh of relief. It will, finally, be 1985. 1984 will have passed, and at last we will be able to consider our electronic wizardry free of George Orwell's prophecies of an all-seeing telescreen and an enslaving Big Brother.

But right now, as John Wicklein looks at the coming communications developments in *Electronic Nightmare*, he is running scared. The centerpiece of his concern is not exactly a government-controlled two-way telescreen, but it is close: he believes that each of us will soon take into our homes a communications set that looks like a standard television with a keyboard attached, a devilish machine that will be linked by communications satellites and optical fiber electronics to computers that can "put us in danger of losing our individual liberty."

Viewed from an Orwellian perspective, certainly, such a mechanism has obvious uses in political repression. Wicklein has studied the latest developments around the world, and he sees an ominous potential for tyranny in a rapidly fusing technology combining television, satellites, and computers. The home TV set will become a two-way instrument used by people to receive, send, and store information about their day-to-day living. The homeowner will use his set to order goods, read advertising, conduct banking, record opinions, send messages, and do many other things through this single channel that are now handled in diverse ways. The nightmare, as Wicklein sees it, will come with the development of omniscient new computers that will have the capacity to store all this information and reveal it in a flash to Big Brother (who Wicklein believes might not turn out to be the government after all, but perhaps

*Fred Graham is law correspondent for CBS News.*



CJR/Jerome Martin

AT&T, IBM, or — egad — CBS!). His point is that never before will so much information about individuals have been concentrated in a single depository, where privacy laws would be inadequate to keep it from unfriendly hands.

So it seems that our technology is taking us on a curiously circular path; a book about expanding communications turns into a study of invasions of deepest privacy. Wicklein argues convincingly that this progression is only logical, but the book that results is unfocused and confusing. It is not, essentially, a book about journalism, and as a study of privacy it ends up where many books have gone before — deploring the dangers of computerized personal dossiers.

But where Wicklein does confine himself to communications, he presents some fascinating projections of what journalism may eventually come to be. It appears obvious, for example, that the drift is toward the tube, but that is scant comfort for the contemporary television journalist, because the televised news of the year 2000 is likely to be so different from today's. While some of it will be

the type of pictures that we use now, some will be words read from the screen; some will be "canned" features — pictures or writing — called up at the desire of the viewer; some will be highly specialized subject matter; and all will be available on a twenty-four-hour basis on several channels — thus diluting the kind of famous-face network journalism that prevails today. And the "news" on the screen will be served up with a blurring mix of other information: weather reports, airline schedules, sports results, advertisements (the classified ads will have been run out of business), commercial listings (so will the yellow pages), public-opinion polling, theater bookings, and on and on.

The picture of the television journalism that will emerge is a cold and impersonal one. For better or worse, journalism on the screen today tends to be more personal than it does in print — the journalists, and their personalities, are more familiar to the public than are print reporters. But TV news may be in a primitive personal stage that will not survive a more sophisticated technol-

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## BOOKS

ogy. If Wicklein's scenario proves out, the personalities of today will fade into a cold blend of see-it-now live coverage, forgettable news features, and words crawling across the screen.

The author, a former print journalist now with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, is fatalistic about these coming changes. He believes that print journalists are whistling past the graveyard when they proclaim that newspapers will survive because people "are going to want to *hold* the newspaper, the way they always did." His basic lament about the coming ascendancy of electronic journalism is directed toward the government. He believes that the Fairness Doctrine is the seed of government control over the broadcast media, and he therefore fears that as journalism becomes more electronic, it is also likely to become more controlled.

**I**t is in the privacy area that the author finds his electronic nightmare. He concludes his book with an Orwellian vision of a nation in which the telephone company knows all, is cowed by the government into telling all, and thus, where individual privacy is concerned, all is lost.

Wicklein may be right, but once we get beyond 1984 it may be easier to see that Orwell's prophecies have been oversold. He was so uncannily right in his predictions about the development of television as a political instrument that it is easy to overlook other ways in which he was wrong. He was wrong in his bleak assumption that the new technology would be abused for totalitarian purposes. There is no indication of this happening in the United States today, and no hint that Americans would put up with it if it was tried. Besides, Orwell was wrong in assuming that the technology would always work. Last week there were stories about a man who received 2,500 utility bills from the gas company's computer, and about a religious cable-TV system that inadvertently showed fifteen minutes of a skin flick (only one customer complained). So perhaps we will avoid the electronic nightmare after all — our technology is not that good, and we are not that bad.



# UNFINISHED BUSINESS

## Bullish pulpit

### TO THE REVIEW:

I wrote two of the articles that Roger Morris cited as examples of Business Day's allegedly naive approach to business coverage ("A Bullish Pulpit: The NYT's Business Desk," *CJR*, May/June): the one on Exxon's acquisition of Reliance to market a new energy-saving motor control, and the one on Gulf & Western's announcement that commercial introduction of its zinc chloride battery was imminent. While I hardly consider these spot news stories important benchmarks for gauging either my or Business Day's performance, I stand by them fully. If Mr. Morris had bothered to get my view, I would have told him that only a fool would describe Exxon's acquisition of Reliance as "a major expansion of the Exxon empire." That's ridiculous. At the time, Exxon was something like an \$80-billion empire. Reliance was a mere billion-dollar duchy. So minor was this takeover that Exxon literally picked up Reliance with corporate petty cash. Can anyone believe that Exxon would cook up a technological sham just to swallow a company whose profitability has rather consistently fallen below its own? Mr. Morris is the one who is naive.

The real story now is how a company so big and powerful managed to make such a fool of itself. Why, and how, did Exxon exercise such poor judgment that it lost a lot of face, dented whatever goodwill it still has in the market, and wound up with an acquisition that neither enhances its profit-and-loss statement nor its corporate strategic plans? That's the sort of hard-hitting story that Business Day should do more frequently, and I'm sure it would if it had a larger staff. But it's not, incidentally, the sort of story that lends itself to Mr. Morris's slapdash brand of "investigative" journalism.

Similarly, Mr. Morris missed the point of the Gulf & Western story. The company never said this was the first time it had reported progress on its battery project, and neither did my article. What the company was saying was that it now felt confident that the development work had finally put its advanced battery in the lead in the race toward commercial introduction of a battery far superior to the rather limited ones now used

in electric cars. Several representatives from the Department of Energy, which supports the project financially and which is privy to its results, were on hand at the news conference and substantiated the company's claims. My story reported all this.

The *Wall Street Journal* coverage that Mr. Morris was more impressed with was, in fact, a rather transparent case of catch-up. After missing the significance of the story in its first-day coverage, and after seeing the larger play that it got not only in the *Times* but also in *Time* and *Newsweek*, the *Journal* resorted to the old "we've seen it all before" tack. Sure we have. There's nothing new under the sun, you know.

ANTHONY J. PARISI  
London, England

## Star darters

### TO THE REVIEW:

Dart: To the *Columbia Journalism Review* for allowing a former *Washington Star* reporter to use a pseudonym while writing a story about *The Washington Star* ("Time Inc.'s 'Unbiased' Satellite," *CJR*, May/June) that leaned heavily on unnamed sources.

DIANE BENISON  
Managing editor  
*The Evening Gazette*  
Worcester, Mass.

The editors reply: *The Review permitted the use of a pseudonym only because there was reason to fear that use of the writer's real name might cost him his job.*

### TO THE REVIEW:

I would like to correct an error in your article on *The Washington Star*. It states that the *Star* was the first newspaper to print in depth from budget director David Stockman's "Black Book." This is not correct.

The *Chicago Sun-Times* reported at length in more than a dozen articles details of the "Black Book" and moved numerous items on the Field News Service wire several days before the *Star* published. The Newhouse News Service moved a lengthy version the day before the *Star* published. *The Washington Post* published a truncated version of the *Sun-Times* articles several days before the *Star* published. With this background, it is

understandable that *Star* editor Murray Gart might be reluctant to display the article prominently.

Your writer also states that many believed the *Post* broke the "Black Book" story when it printed, on page 1, a number of articles based on the budget document several days after the *Star* story. In reality, the question being asked by economic reporters in town was not whether the *Post* had broken the story, but why it so prominently displayed information it had previously published and which had been published and broadcast widely over a period of six days.

LEONARD CURRY  
Chief economics correspondent  
Newhouse News Service  
Washington, D.C.

"William Boot" replies: *This isn't the first time I have been accused of failing to identify an exclusive story for what it is, but that was in another country — Ishmaelia, 1937, a year of my youth in which the lovely spring weather interested me so much I nearly forgot to report the palace coup that I stumbled across. Does one never learn? I said Jon Fuerbringer was "apparently" the first reporter to obtain the "Black Book," but appearances can be deceiving: the Sun-Times had the story first.*

*In fairness to myself, however, I should point out that the Star's competition is not the Chicago Sun-Times, but The Washington Post. Fuerbringer of the Star did get his copy of the "Black Book" before the Post did, and he did score a beat over the Post in a story which was exclusive within the Washington market. So when the Star gave its story unduly subdued play (for reasons I am told had nothing to do with the Sun-Times), it made perfect sense for the Post to play its story big.*

## Prophets return fire

### TO THE REVIEW:

Joe Nocera's review of our book *Media-Power-Politics* ("Bottom-Line Prophets," *CJR*, May/June) is concocted in large measure of distortions and wholly fabricated versions of our arguments and ideas. Nocera brutally misrepresents our work by conjoining out-of-context quotes from different parts of the book; by crude over-simplifications,

perverse emphases, and false implications; by omitting our carefully drawn caveats and distinctions; and by erroneously interpreting our analysis and speculations as prescriptions. We are not now, nor have we ever been, adherents of most of the views he ascribes to us and our book.

Given our limited space here, we shall confine ourselves to three examples of how our work has been misrepresented.

Nocera alleges that our analysis demonstrates an "overweening obsession with profits." In fact, in our chapter devoted to an overview of the roots of media coverage we write that "profits and prestige set the boundaries of media news content." We then go on to discuss such other factors as the backgrounds and attitudes of journalists; definitions of news; the process of gathering, describing, and transmitting news; and the mode of presentation.

Worse, Nocera blurs the existence of a group of reporters on the same beat with the phenomenon of pack journalism — which we explicitly define as "the frequent tendency of different reporters to write (and editors to assign) virtually identical political stories." While we write that this behavior arises "in part from the comfort of individual conformity" and in part from profit considerations, we also carefully observe that pack journalism may conflict with profit maximization since it lowers the frequency of "exciting, different stories that stand out from the pack and boost ratings or circulation." We subsequently dissect several other causes of pack journalism, including competition, physical proximity among reporters, short-ages of time and space, the need for simplification, and the pressure to sell stories to editors. So much for profits as the only explanation.

Similarly, Nocera alleges that we write that "stories about business" should include questioning of the forces that induce immorality and illegality in corporate behavior. In fact, we were writing not of stories of business generally but of coverage of proven business violations of law. By deleting the specific context, Nocera imputes to us — then criticizes us for — generalizations we did not make, an ideology we do not propound.

DAVID L. PALETZ  
Associate professor of political science  
ROBERT M. ENTMAN  
Assistant professor of public policy studies  
Duke University  
Durham, N.C.

Editors' note: Joseph Nocera, who lives in Paris, will be given an opportunity to reply in the next issue.

## The sabotage hype

### TO THE REVIEW:

Angus Mackenzie's excellent article, "Sabotaging the Dissident Press," was marred by CJR's inaccurate self-hype ("On the Trail of a Secret War," CJR, March/April) which claims that the story was previously untold.

Not so. *Alternative Media* magazine has published several lengthy articles that specifically detail the FBI's war on the undergrounds. Also discussed is the unwitting hiring of CIA operative Sal Ferrera by College Press Service and other alternative publications. Moreover, dozens of underground and alternative publications have reported the repression against their own and other publications, not only in historical retrospect, but also day by day and week by week as the repression happened in the sixties and early seventies. At the time it occurred, such repression against underground and alternative publications was generally overlooked by the mainstream press, just as CJR has overlooked the coverage given the subject in the alternative press.

CJR would do better to pay less attention to patting its own back and more attention to the ongoing repression against alternative publications, including community, rank-and-file union dissident, revolutionary, and gay periodicals that are currently being attacked by governmental agencies and right-wing groups.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
Alternative Press Syndicate  
New York, N.Y.

The editors reply: *We agree — for the most part. In our editorial we perhaps oversimplified what Angus Mackenzie spelled out with more care in his article — namely, that the tactics used by three federal agencies against the dissenting press had not previously been reported "in a comprehensive way," and that, prior to Mr. Mackenzie's attempt to put it all together, the full story had "lain scattered in a hundred places."*

Editors' note: Angus Mackenzie has been informed by the CIA that he may now obtain, free of charge, the agency's files on newspapers that may have been spied on illegally by the CIA. There is one proviso: Mackenzie can take advantage of this offer only after he has obtained releases from the publications in question. Accordingly, he requests that editors or publishers of college and underground newspapers, existing or defunct, furnish him with a notarized statement authorizing him to receive intelligence files on their publications. Such assistance will enable Mackenzie to pursue his investigation of

how government agencies tried to put underground and antiwar papers out of business in the 1960s and early 1970s. Releases may be mailed to: Angus Mackenzie, 199 Bonview St., San Francisco, Calif. 94110.

## Hey, Review: Get it straight!

### TO THE REVIEW:

This survivor of the "old" *Daily News* finds within Mary Breasted's "Hey, News: Look Alive!" (CJR, March/April) a shocking display of misinformation. With its imputation that the *News*, even into the 1950s and 1960s, relied for its success on sex and sensation (hear those hisses), the *Review* follows the lead of *New York* magazine when it was run by Clay Felker and Edwin Diamond. These worthies and their contributors, among them Chris Welles, labored for years to cement in the public mind the notion that the *News* was a mere scandal sheet until it was purified by Michael J. O'Neill.

O'Neill has never disowned his supporters' portrait of him as a journalistic St. George, although his own comments have been tamer. The *New York* writers' bad *News*-good *News* theme was sounded the very same month in 1969 in which O'Neill got the title of managing editor. The variations went on for ten years. They had a happy sequel, though. Felker and Diamond are now high on the *News* editorial pole, in charge of *Tonight*.

For quotes, take this example — Chris Welles in *New York* of March 21, 1975: "The *News* continued to offer a lurid, male-oriented blend of sex, sin and sensation. . . ." But, ". . . with the growing influence at the *News* of Publisher W. H. James and Executive Editor Michael O'Neill, the paper has toned down its sensationalistic sexist slant and re-emphasized hard, responsible local reporting." Re-emphasized?

Meanwhile, what's your analysis of the *News*, old and new? Mentioning lamentation among *News* staffers about the passing of the "good old *Daily News*," your writer quickly wipes out the "good," proceeding: "Such nostalgia would no doubt delight the heart of Joseph Medill Patterson, could he hear from his perch in Tabloid Heaven how fondly remembered are his newspaper's lurid divorce trial stories, the front-page photograph of a woman being electrocuted . . . and such voluptuous story leads as 'Patricia Burton Lonergan's slim, tapering fingers may point the way to her slayer.'"

There's a curious thing about the horrible examples your writer cites. They all go back to the 1930s. Not a quote from the fifties and

# THE TRUTH

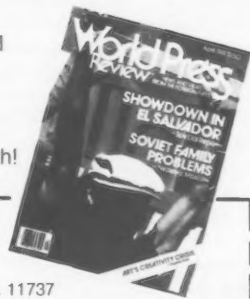
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sixties, or even the forties. Why didn't somebody look at the files? Why not present the facts?

We who worked on the "old" *News* believe that it was not only a lively, brilliantly written, and brightly illustrated newspaper; it was respected for its fairness and accuracy.

WILLIAM A. CASSELMAN  
Elizabethtown, N.Y.

### Hearst on his own petard?

#### TO THE REVIEW:

From a long list of misinterpretations, mistakes, and misquotes found in *The Hearsts: Family and Empire — the Later Years*, James Boylan seized on a colorful but misleading quote in his book review in the March/April issue of *CJR*.

As a longtime reporter with the *San Francisco Examiner*, I had collaborated with Will Hearst in a 1976 series about corporate theft of billion-dollar federal irrigation subsidies intended for family farmers. In the book, I am quoted as "musing" that this young man, then trying to learn the ropes, could turn out to be "an asshole, like the rest."

In context, the remark appears to refer to the rest of the Hearst family. In fact, during a conversation that had clearly been delineated as background, I had referred instead to the general class of scions of notable or powerful family businesses. Use of the dirty word is a violation of ordinary manners; the dishonest inference violates the truth. The *Hearsts* of my personal acquaintance simply don't qualify for that pejorative.

As for Will, he turned out to be a resourceful reporter with a well-developed sense of outrage and a gift for comprehension of complex issues. He was not, as the authors assert in another quote attributed (shudder) to me, "literally on fire."

As co-editor of *feedback: The California Journalism Review*, and as a spare-time journalism teacher for many years at San Francisco State University, I can assure you that the *Hearst* newspapers, like all the rest, could profit from honest criticism and informed analysis of the owners, managers, and working stiffs. This book offers neither.

LYNN LUDLOW  
Mill Valley, Calif.

James Boylan replies: I took Ludlow's reference to "assholes" in the same sense in which he apparently intended it.

### Striking news

#### TO THE REVIEW:

In a letter that appeared in the January/

February *Review* ("The Gdansk Factor"), Russell W. Gibbons, public relations director for United Steelworkers of America, complained that a 1978-1980 strike at the Newport News ship building company was "largely ignored by the news media."

As evidence of this, Mr. Gibbons cited a 1979 photo from the *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot* which he said was distributed by the AP but "was not picked up by any other daily newspaper in North America." *CJR* correctly published the very dramatic photo, but it might have verified Mr. Gibbons's contention that the photo was transmitted by the AP.

In response to my inquiry, Louis D. Boccardi, executive editor of The Associated Press, reported that the AP made a thorough search and "could find no national distribution of the picture." Mr. Boccardi said the photo apparently was moved on April 17, 1979, on the Virginia and West Virginia legs of the AP's photo network.

It is important that *CJR* readers understand that the facts in this case do not support the implication that American editors ignore labor news. The *Charlotte Observer* would have published the photo, had it been available. And I believe most newspapers would have used it.

RICHARD A. OPPEL  
Editor  
The Charlotte Observer  
Charlotte, N.C.

Russell W. Gibbons replies: 1. The photo editor at the *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot* told me and several other people concerned with the strike situation that the photo had been transmitted by the Associated Press photo wire. 2. That there was "no national distribution" of the photo, but rather only "on the West Virginia and Virginia legs" of the network, raises further questions as to (subjective) editorial judgment of those responsible for selecting a "very dramatic photo" for transmission only regionally, when the police action involved had made two of the three networks that evening.

Editor & Publisher lists forty-five daily newspapers in Virginia and twenty-three in West Virginia, so the legitimacy of the question still has merit: why did not one other newspaper pick up the photo, especially since it involved state news for the Virginia papers?

Accordingly, I believe that there is more than an "implication" that in this instance the item was ignored, and that besides the rather poor judgment of AP photo selection at the source, editors in two states apparently decided to ignore a photo that told more than any story could have.

### That Standard ad (cont'd)

#### TO THE REVIEW:

Your letter from Mr. Vic Reinemer, editor/publisher of *Public Power*, a publication of the American Public Power Association ("Standard's Ad," *CJR*, May/June), is inaccurate and misleading.

Reinemer's assertion that the chief executive officers of several financial institutions personally control more than 14 percent of the stock of Standard Oil Company (Indiana) demonstrates to us a lack of understanding of the fundamentals of stock ownership in U.S. corporations. The banks to which Mr. Reinemer refers hold the stock in a "representative" rather than "owner" capacity, with pass-through voting rights to the real owners or investment managers in nearly all cases.

For example, the First National Bank of Chicago is the trustee of Standard's employees' savings plan. While 20.5 million shares, or 7 per cent of present outstanding shares, are held in the bank's name as trustee, the shares are, in fact, owned and voted by some 35,000 Standard Oil Company employees.

No person (individual, institution, or otherwise) owns more than 5 percent of Standard Oil Company (Indiana) stock. As our ad stated, our shareholders include insurance companies, retirement plans, colleges, estates, trusts, charities, foundations, banks, and similar fiduciaries that hold shares in a representative capacity for beneficial owners. This is the broad ownership referred to in our ad.

ALAN B. GROH  
Manager, Public Affairs Planning  
and Programming  
Standard Oil Company (Indiana)  
Chicago, Ill.

### Footnote to Nicaragua

The editors regret their inadvertent failure to credit John S. Nichols, assistant professor of journalism at Pennsylvania State University, as the source of certain information in the article on Nicaragua ("The Junta and the Press: a Family Affair") in the March/April issue.

### Deadline

The editors welcome and encourage letters from readers. To be considered for publication in the September/October issue, letters to the *Review* should be received by July 20. Letters are subject to editing for clarity and space.



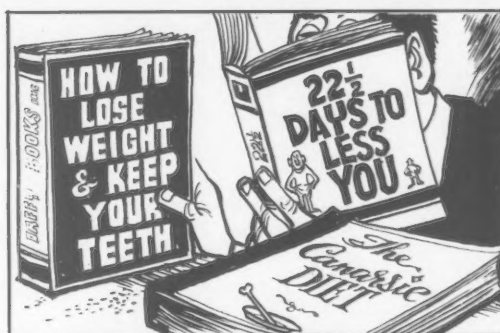
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diet is a key  
to good  
health, but...**



**what about  
the millions of  
food-faddists,  
daffy-dieters,  
junk-food kids  
and gulp-&-  
dash execs?**



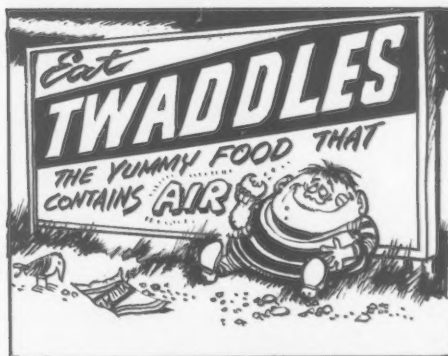
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# BRIEFINGS

**Channels of Communication**, April/  
May 1981

The steadily evolving species of magazines about television continues to produce distinctive varieties. *The Dial*, for instance, a hothouse program guide developed by the Public Broadcasting Service and sent monthly to some 720,000 PBS subscribers in six major cities, features background pieces, criticism, and commentary tied to the network's current programs (how to listen to Bernstein conducting Mahler, what lawyers think of Rumpole, what to make of Julia Childs's odd pronunciation of "shallots"); not surprisingly, *The Dial*'s most provocative material to date has been its advertisements, which critics and competitors have challenged in light of PBS's public-funded status. *Panorama*, on the other hand, an overfed offspring of *TV Guide*, went ranging through the seemingly boundless territory of ratings and programming, cable and video cassettes, nostalgia and futurism, politics, profiles, previews, and heavily illustrated pieces on travel and sports; so panoramic, in fact, was its scope that the magazine had difficulty gaining a foothold with readers, and, despite strong success with advertisers, *Panorama* was by the spring of its second year suddenly extinct. That same season, however, saw the emergence of yet another variety. Funded by a grant from the John and Mary R. Markel Foundation and under the editorship of Les Brown, who formerly covered broadcasting for *The New York Times*, *Channels of Communication* began publication with its April/May issue.

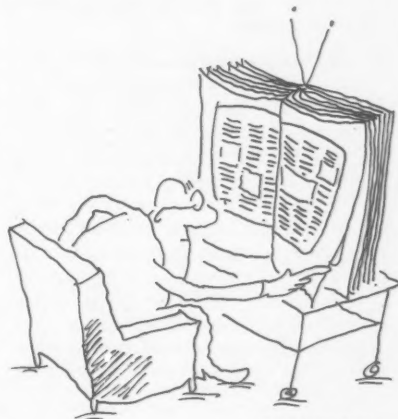
According to its founding editorial, *Channels* is committed to "serious thought about television, for people who read," and the premier issue, certainly, offers promising evidence of this good intention. A front-of-the-book Cross Currents section is a pleasing hybrid of reports and observations on current topics, while the On Air department presents a number of signed opinion pieces by well-known outside writers. The Public Eye department of the first issue focuses on broadcasting deregulation; editor Brown's thoughtful discussion of this continuing de-

bate merits attention from the industry, the public, and policymakers alike. *Channels*'s informative and polished articles reflect its chosen identity as "The Magazine of Television and Society": a sharp look at the networks' approach to sex education, a literate social analysis of *Dallas*'s appeal, a critical examination of the cable franchise game, some telling perceptions about the changing ways that commercial television has portrayed blacks over the past three decades.

But perhaps the clearest clue to the difference between *Channels* and the other entries in the field can be seen in John Hess's "The Taking of PBS 1-2-3," an investigative report not likely to have appeared in either *Panorama* or *The Dial*. Hess, a former *New York Times* reporter and longtime media critic who has managed to retain both his irreverence for institutions and his capacity for outrage, tells the little-known story of a little-known station in Erie, Pennsylvania, that is changing the landscape of public television — and with it, possibly, our political landscape as well. The station, WQLN-TV, explains Hess, has as its president and manager one Robert Chitester, a long-ago liberal who in 1976 discovered the philosophy of economist Milton Friedman and has been hell-bent on a crusade of ultraconservative libertarianism ever since. It was Chitester, for example, who originated, promoted, and produced the 1980 ten-part series on Friedman's *Free to Choose*, a \$2.8 million project filmed in eight countries and underwritten by, among others, the Coors, Getty, National Presto, Reader's Digest, and Sarah Scaife foundations (see page 41 of this issue of the *Review*). The series' success was quickly followed by *The War Called Peace*, a ninety-minute special propagating the notion that the Soviet Union has already begun World War III, and *The Stan Freberg Federal Budget Review*, an entertaining extravaganza dedicated to the Republican battle cry of too much government, and carried, ironically enough, by 152 public television stations in the last days before the Republican sweep. What's more, reports Hess, these first three smashes are only the beginning: if Chitester's ten-year plan goes according to the schedule proposed in his fundraising pamphlet, "Communications and a Free

Society," we can expect to see a wave of programs on such subjects as the questionable motives of environmentalists, the insignificance of food additives and industrial chemicals as a cause of cancer, the importance of maintaining good U.S. relations with Taiwan, and the positive value of selfishness as a social characteristic.

How, one wonders, do Chitester and his backers — not to mention the publicly funded stations that pick up the blatantly political stuff — get away with it? Easy, says Hess. In the first place, PBS can tack on a



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panel discussion at the end of a program, and thereby convince itself and its viewers that the show is "balanced." In the second place, when a show is so obvious in its bias that PBS balks, Chitester can, as he did in the Freberg case, make an end run around the distributor and set up a special hookup on the public television satellite for those stations around the country — and there are plenty — willing to carry it. Additionally, in partnership with W. Allen Wallis, chancellor of the University of Rochester and a former member of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Chitester has shrewdly set up a couple of companies that help things along — Public Communications Inc., an independent non-profit outfit that produces the shows, and Penn Communications Inc., a for-profit company that sells cassettes and other mate-

rials to corporations, which in turn give them away as gifts to schools.

Hess argues halfheartedly for full financial disclosure of Chitester's companies, but clearly knows that, given the temper of the times, the economic squeeze, and PBS's own timidity, this mild requirement would hardly be sufficient to stop the show — and anyway, concludes Hess, the Chitester case is merely one disturbing (and dangerous) example of the inherent weakness of a public television system dependent on corporate donors. Nevertheless, there is some reassurance in knowing that if the shows must go on, a magazine like *Channels* is on the scene to give us a real TV guide to the players.

**The News of the World in Four Major Wire Services**, by David H. Weaver, G. Cleveland Wilhoit, Robert L. Stevenson, Donald Lewis Shaw, and Richard R. Cole, Schools of Journalism, Indiana University and the University of North Carolina, 1980

As the debate on third-world coverage intensifies in heat, recent social science research may contribute valuable light. Responding to a call at the 19th General Conference of UNESCO in Nairobi in 1976, a group of scholars meeting at the conference of the International Association for Mass Communication Research in Warsaw in 1978 undertook a major international study of national images portrayed in the world press. Ultimately, the study involved some twenty research teams from various countries; this present paper represents the findings of the U.S. team as prepared for inclusion in the final report.

The team's study, following the scheme standardized for use by all the researchers working on the project, is an analysis of the content and flow of eight selected services of the big four Western news agencies — The Associated Press, United Press International, Reuters, and Agence France-Presse — during a continuous six-day week in 1979 and a "constructed" week in the first half of that year. (An abbreviated version, which deals exclusively with the AP and UPI, appears in the spring 1981 issue of the *Journal of Communication*.) In an informative introduction setting their findings in the context of the structure and function of international news distribution, the authors note that although the four major Western wire services supply the great bulk of foreign news that is used by most of the world's mass media, there are more than a hundred national news agencies, most of them in the third world, which are in a position to play a major role in gate-keeping and news supply. Thoroughly familiar with previous research in the field and obviously sensitive to third-world complaints of monopolization and misrepresentation by the Western wires, the authors explain that some of their findings came as a bit of a surprise.

For example, while the findings support the charge that Western coverage of less-developed third-world countries tends to concentrate on conflicts and crises (though with less attention to natural disasters and crime than some critics have claimed), analysis of both the number and length of the agencies' foreign-dated stories shows that, as a group, the less-developed countries receive more international coverage than do the more-developed ones. Another major

finding is that, as the authors put it, "international news reporting equals politics" — in other words, they explain, not only do the Western agencies consider politics to be the most newsworthy topic from all areas (with the exception of Africa, where military matters take precedence, and the general world category, which is dominated by economics), but their lead seems to be followed by each of the twenty-nine national press systems under study as well, all of which have politics at the top of the list. (Particularly striking, the authors point out, is the similarity between the most frequently mentioned themes found in each of the twenty-nine national news services, in the same rank order: terrorism, political independence, individual freedoms, religious/ethnic antagonism, energy, third-world development, and subversion). But the most important finding of all, in the authors' view, is that the Western wire services going into other regions such as Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa carry a heavy concentration of news that actually *originates* in those respective regions.

What this all adds up to, say the authors, is that present patterns of international reporting seem to be rather standard among all of the Western news agencies, that these patterns pretty much reflect the same news definitions — the official release, the exceptional event — that operate in covering the domestic scene, and that it would be a good idea for journalists both within and outside of the news agencies to constantly question traditional judgments of what is news. Indeed, such questioning may be much more basic to the cause of international understanding than measuring the column inches given to this country or that.

**The Prestige Press and the Christmas Bombing, 1972**, by Martin F. Herz, assisted by Leslie Rider, Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1980

Whatever their political stripe, most media watchers are irresistibly drawn to any and all discussions about press performance during the Vietnam War, and this latest exercise from a right-wing think tank should prove no exception. Here, Ernest W. Lefever, who wrote the introduction, his Ethics and Public Policy Center, which sponsored the research, and Martin F. Herz, a former ambassador and now director of Georgetown's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, who prepared the report, are concerned solely with the coverage of the eleven-day military operation known as the Christmas Bombing of 1972 — and, not incidentally (or so it would



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appear), with revising history's estimate of that unforgettable event.

Basically, the report contends that America's prestige press — namely, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, and the three commercial networks — was so blinded by its own liberal, antiwar sentiments that it failed to report the facts and meaning of the December 18-29, 1972, bombing of the Hanoi-Haiphong area of North Vietnam with any degree of accuracy, objectivity, or analytic judgment. Taking his cue from the emotionally outraged editorials that the bombing provoked, Herz charges that such editorial attitudes inevitably found their way into the news columns and newscasts — reflected, for example, in the disproportionate citing of negative reaction, both foreign and domestic, to the bombing, both as an act and as an effective strategy. (*The New York Times*, for instance, devoted 1,000 lines to foreign criticism, as contrasted with ninety lines that could be called supportive).

Other distortions, reports Herz, had to do with the extent of damage and the toll of casualties: contrary to the press reports of wholesale devastation, says Herz, the number of civilians killed in Hanoi was "exceedingly low" (1,318, as later revealed by official North Vietnamese count); destruction to the city, according to subsequent accounts by reliable witnesses, was relatively minor; and there is simply no evidence to support the highly publicized reports of indiscriminate carpet-bombing of civilian areas by the American B-52s, which were in fact targeting military facilities with remarkable precision. Moreover, notes Herz,

when such untidy details did become officially available to the press, they were either ignored or tucked away without comment in the papers' back pages.

But misreporting the facts of the operation was not the news media's only sin; according to Herz, they also failed to explain to the public the rationale behind the decision to drop the 20,000 tons of bombs in the first place; to present the initiative in the context of the bogged-down peace talks (a situation, notes Herz, which itself was not examined adequately by the press); and at least to consider the possibility that the bombing might well have been diplomatically effective in bringing a suddenly stalling Hanoi back to the bargaining table.

Much of the misrepresentation, Herz finds, came from the media's tendency to put more credence in reports from the enemy than in statements from the government of the United States (though he carefully avoids getting into the reasons why this should be so). He does, however, lay some of the blame (or as Nixon might prefer to put it, some of the responsibility) at the door of Nixon himself. In the author's view, Nixon's rejection of Kissinger's advice that he go on television to rally the people and enlist their support was yet another instance of the misguided course of silence maintained by the administration throughout the war — a course which ultimately, and ironically, deprived the media of the kind of information that might have produced the balanced coverage the government so keenly sought. This lesson of that Christmas Past, no doubt, will not be lost on the present administration in its own encounters with any similar Christmases Future.

G.C.

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# The Lower case

## Reagan wins on budget, but more lies ahead

The Morning News (Blackfoot, Id.) 5/22/81

## Atlanta body not connected

Post-Tribune (Jefferson City, Mo.) 4/1/81

## Did Pope suspect plot to murder the Queen?

The Miami News 5/19/81

## Officers Finally Getting Shot At Promotion Exams

The Atlanta Constitution 5/4/81

## Arizona county to cremate indigents

The Daily Pantagraph (Bloomington, Ill.) 3/27/81

## SSU Hornets Will Accent Throwing Game In '81

The Sacramento Bee 5/26/81

## Carl Sagan named 'Humorist of Year'

Morning Advocate (Baton Rouge, La.) 4/16/81

## Free paper guide priced at \$18.50

Editor & Publisher 3/21/81

## UConn to study taste and smell disorders

The Boston Globe 5/28/81

**6:30 p.m. 12 Inside Story** Introduction of the series which examines how the press handles developments in the news. Anchored by Hodding Carter, former assistant secretary of state for public affairs, each program will concentrate on how well Bob Elliott and Ray Goulding (Bob and Ray) perform brief segments on the foibles of the news business. (½ hr.)

The Philadelphia Inquirer 5/10/81

Last Thursday was a big day for Republican political activity in Whatcom County.

While Sumas farmer Gerald Digeress was out announcing his shot at the State Senate seat of Democrat Lowell Peterson, a declared candidate for governor, Republican House co-speaker Duane Berentson, stopped in Bellingham to expose himself to northern voters.

Lynden Tribune (Lynden, Wash.) 1/9/80

The apots promoting New York City used a Broadway musical version of the "I Love New York" line, with actors waving their residuals.

Adweek 5/11/81



LAST FORMATION — John Peterson (left), Cave Junction police chief, gathers four members of his force outside headquarters. A severe budget crisis will force the department to go out of business Oct. 31.

Staff photo by MICHAEL LLOYD  
The Portland Oregonian 10/31/80





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